THE LIVING AGE.

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BILL THE DREAMER.

"Some day when I'm rich (said Bill)
I'm going to leave the sea;
Sail and steam alike shall see the living last of me,
And 'bout ship or heave her to, they'll rouse me out no more
In a clean quiet cottage like I've often seen ashore,
With hen-and-chickens daisies growing by the door.

"Quiet will the days come and easy will they go,
Smoking of my pipe there and working with a hoe,
And thinking of poor mates o' mine toiling in the cold,
That hadn't sense to leave it and they growing old.

"For when all's said and done, lads, it's little short of sin
To spend your money foolish that's bitter hard to win.
I'll save my pay a year or two, and then I'll sail no more,
Sitting down so easy in my little place ashore."

And so went his yarn on, and so would he say—
Round the Horn with hurricanes blowing all the way,
All the way from Callao trudging home again
To the Bar light shining in the wind and rain.

And who's to keep from share and share with friends o' the best?
And girls along the waterfront they'll help to spend the rest;
And the cottage and the garden and the daisies at the door
They went the way of many dreams when sailors come to shore.

And he's rolling down to Rio with a drunken Dago crew
And the deadheads under hatches till they've got their groaning through;
Yes, he's rolling down to Rio . . . as he's often done before,
And will do till the day comes for Bill to sail no more,
When the ninth wave, the last wave, shall bring him to shore.

C. Fox Smith.

The Spectator.

WOMAN TO MAN.

God made you strong;
And you have taken your strength,
Carried it the world's length,
Built it into bridges,
Spanning the mountain ridges;
Hewn it from the stone's stress,
To images of immortal loneliness;
Given it for walls to master
The gigantic flood's disaster;
Against the terrific gale
Sent it in ships to sail;
Delivered it in vast, illimitable godlike message
Against the storm's cold presage.

From the beginning of all things
There came to me a dream on beating wings;
My strength was in that dream's uncertain span;
God called it His, and made from it a man.
Robbed, weak, twice-spent,
Yet in my desolation is my monument,
For it would seem
The whole world rests its pillars on my dream.

Agnes Grozier Herbertson.

The Nation.

SONG.

Think of nothing but the day:
Yesterday is dead and gone,
And to-morrow will not stay
Longer than another one.

Why should Time, that cannot mar
One triumphant rose's scent,
Stint our joys, because they are
Blossoms, fair not permanent?

Any joy like any flower
Has its instant blossoming:
How can even Time have power
Over either perfect thing?

Arthur Symons.

THE RENAISSANCE OF DANCING.*

To the average Anglo-Saxon dancing is an amusement, either a spectacular entertainment at which the interest is more often concentrated upon the personal charms of the performers than upon their skill, or a ballroom gathering which suggests an agreeable combination of music and color, of shady corners and pleasant meetings. To some people it is a puerile diversion merely worthy of contempt; to others a grossly immoral proceeding deserving of utter reprobation. The possibility of its being a serious form of art, requiring a long and arduous apprenticeship and meriting careful and critical comprehension, is a fact appreciated by a minority. Dancing as an integral part of life, an essential factor in religion, as one of the major arts expressive and interpretative, as a valuable educational training, is at the present day hardly conceivable.

The majority of the public have long been content to tolerate its appearance as an inevitable but somewhat uninteresting part of a pantomime, or as one of the less attractive items of a music-hall programme. There is, of course, at times a *furore* for some particular dancer; and the mass of color and movement of a good ballet, especially if reinforced by the more questionable charm of a troupe of high kickers, is a fairly certain attraction; but on the whole it must be allowed that the critical appreciation of dancing as an art is limited. Most men probably agree with Shelley's dictum, that every male dancer ought to be hamstrung for effeminacy; and it is by no means one of the least of the triumphs of M. Nijinski, of the Russian Ballet, and M. Mordkin at the Palace Theatre, that they have demonstrated the fact that a man can dance without being necessarily effeminate or ridiculous.

The ballet has tended—in common, it must be allowed, with other forms of entertainment—to make less and less demand upon intelligence and intellectual appreciation, and more and more upon the eye, by providing a simple sensuous impression of color on movement. Gradually it has developed into a mere spectacular show, a gorgeous riot of beautiful dresses and faces, the chief interest and attraction of which has remarkably little to do with dancing. Vast sums of money are spent on scenery and dress, large bodies of women, of whom very few are really dancers, are marshalled on to the stage to perform a few more or less simple evolutions, and to compose a background for the performance of one or two favorites.

The dancing, however, which is now coming into fashion, and which seems likely to gain increasing favor, if not to effect a permanent influence, is something different. We are now asked to look upon dancing as an art, as an expression of emotional individuality to a degree, and in a way, to which we have not hitherto been accustomed. This revival has not only had a spontaneous origin in this country but has also come to us from both East and West. There is the renewed interest in the old English dances; the revolt against the limitation of the time-honored waltz and polka in order to get freedom and interest into the ballroom; the advent of Miss Isadora Duncan from New York and Miss Maud Allan from the wilds of California, calling us to return to nature in the guise of the old Greek dances. From Russia, *via* Paris, where so much

*1. The Russian Ballet. By A. E. Johnson. Constable. 1913.
2. The Art of Nijinski. By Geoffrey Whitworth. Chatto and Windus. 1913.
3. Modern Dancing and Dancers. By J. E Crawford Flitch. Grant Richards 1911.

that is new in art and literature has arisen in recent years to stir the rest of Europe, have come Mme. Pavlova and M. Mordkin, and as a culmination the full Russian ballet.

The books at the head of this article —a further indication of the interest that is being aroused on all sides— make an opportune appearance. It is particularly valuable, when the air is so full of ideas and theories with regard to the dance, to have so sane and comprehensive a study of the art of stage dancing as that given by Mr. Crawford Flitch in "Modern Dancing and Dancers." All kinds of dancing that have been in vogue during recent years are fully treated. If we are not quite able to endorse the writer's prophecy that dancing is again to hold the place it held in the ancient world, we may well believe that we have in this movement an impetus that will raise the position of dancing—particularly the pantomimic dance—into the region of serious art.

The position which dancing holds among the most primitive races is an indication of its claim to be the earliest of the arts. In their development the arts have arisen, now from some spontaneous activity, now from utility. The spontaneous arts are earlier than the useful—since man was living and acting before he had begun to devise the useful accessories to help him to live more comfortably. Dancing in some crude form—the most spontaneous expression of feeling—must have been coeval with man.

The rude ceremonies, wild dances and shoutings, cruel initiations and sacrifices, in which savages indulge, are not so much deliberately planned performances as the natural repetitions of actions believed to be necessary for some purpose, or are mere spontaneous outbursts. By degrees, however, the various evolutions, grimaces, and gestures, becoming significant, are modified by a sense of their effect. Soon they cease to be a mere irresponsible outlet for passing feelings; they become intentionally expressive, and, when thus modified, begin to deserve the name of art.

Man requires this ordered scheme of rhythm to make his dancing effective. Many an animal can instinctively produce more beautiful and interesting movements than can man, who is not happy in this respect. Much training is required before his somewhat ungainly leapings and boundings become beautiful. Most dances, even among savages, are somewhat ridiculous, and even at the present time our society dances are so ugly, and so wanting in spectacular effect, that participation alone renders them tolerable. But in the days when man was nearer nature, when self-consciousness was less oppressive, when society held its sway more completely over the individual, he could lend himself more freely to take his place, as it were, in the pageant of the world. The dance subsequently became less a spontaneous vent for excitement, or a mere means of raising a pleasurable stirring of the emotions, than a form of social discipline. The sympathy of numbers in accentuating emotion is powerful; to tread the measure of a sacred dance, to move in some stately ceremonial, to act some form of dance and drama in unison, fills the soul with a deep emotion. This excitement, though out of all proportion to the needs of the moment, induces, by the display of art, an attitude of mind of great value in the production of a social sense.

The pleasure felt in such exercises would naturally lead to their presentation to any deities that the primitive mind had evolved. Gods, imagined as beings of like passions with men, would naturally be pleased with the things that delighted their worshippers. So the sacrifice of savory meats

would be accompanied by dances, and these would become the natural ceremonial of worship, and the emotions felt in the sympathetic excitement of concerted music and dance would prove beyond all question the presence of the divinity.

In analyzing the state of mind which dancing produces, large allowance must be made for the pleasant glow of excitement caused by the excess of blood sent to the brain. The agreeable uniformity in the succession of muscular efforts, and the rhythmical period of their recurrence also play their part. The voice and the facial muscles, and many of the organs are affected at the same time, the result being a high state of vitality which may even reach to a kind of madness, such as we see in the case of the spinning dervishes, or in the ecstatic worship of Bacchus and Cybele. This kind of abnormal exaltation, by its power of suspending intellectual control, is of course apt to give full rein to the animal impulses. It is not unnatural, therefore, particularly among primitive tribes, to find a wild dance the accompaniment of, or prelude to, licentious orgies. But as the same results are found in connection with the more highly emotional religious demonstrations, there is no need to condemn the dance too severely. The connection between dancing and the emotion of sex, which has always tended to bring the dance under the ban of the moral reformer, is an interesting one. Certain biological analogies, such as the peculiar displays and antics of birds and animals at pairing time, suggest that in primitive times man may have advantageously utilized the power of song and dance to help his wooing. It is, however, unnecessary to look for such analogies. The strong emotional tension which accompanies courtship must have given rise to some method of outlet by movements of which we may assume dancing to be one; such movements, when repeated, would, by association, suggest the pleasurable feelings with which they have been connected. Again, as the sex emotion is the strongest of all the feelings, any other rapture or excitement is apt to borrow its form of expression from this elementary passion—generally, we may imagine, with complete unconsciousness, as, for example, in the tendency to kiss and embrace upon the receipt of unexpected good news, or other pleasing excitement. But no doubt the most natural explanation lies in the weakening of self-control produced by the exhilarating excitement of the dance, when the strongest emotion will naturally be the first to make itself felt.

In early times dancing, inseparable from the display of strong feeling, became intimately connected with the important things of life. As part of religious ceremonial it acquired dignity and meaning; gestures, as they became stereotyped, conveyed definite ideas. The Egyptian and Indian dances were full of mystical significance, requiring for their understanding an intimate knowledge of the symbolism employed; but, on the other hand, the beautifully rhythmic movements of the dances of Greece have an effect that is universal. They are of all time, because they have their appeal directly to the senses, expressing the language of mood and emotion by pure grace of movement; they speak a tongue common to the world. In Greece rhythmic beauty of pose and movement reached its finest development. Everybody danced, and everybody appreciated, to a pitch never since approached, the beauty of the human form. The dance was at once the inspirer of art and inspired by the genius of the artist.

In the golden age of Greece the dance occupied a position of dignity and importance difficult for us to realize at the present day. But it is of

great interest to note how closely the purity of the dance depends upon the general moral level. The Greeks were for a time able to keep their worship of the beauty of the human figure on a plane so high that they saw no harm in the freest exhibition of the nude form. Youths and maidens danced naked in the Gymnopædia. The moment that the purity and austerity of their morals became relaxed this became impossible; and the gradually increasing licentiousness involved the dance and corrupted its purity.

In Rome, by the time of Cicero, the dance was not held in high repute, and the prevailing attitude is reflected in his remark "Nemo saltat sobrius, nisi insanit." This shows how far the change had gone since the time of Plato, who considered the dance so valuable a factor in elevating and perfecting the character of the citizen that he wished it to be the particular care of the State to foster it in every way.

Among simple people with primitive virtues and strong moral feelings, the dance has always been marked by a strict and almost ceremonial character, but as soon as manners decay, the dance quickly becomes decadent. This art reflects too quickly and too faithfully the feelings of the people. No one would think of describing the dancing of the present day as reprehensible, or, except in rare instances, as improper; but there is no doubt that the dance does suffer from its identification at various periods with licentiousness and immorality.

We have already drawn attention to the weakening of self-control produced by the excitement of dancing. And it must also be remembered that if people have any tendency to immodesty the dance provides unusually favorable conditions for its display, and also unrivalled opportunities for working upon the feelings of the opposite sex. One cannot, therefore, be altogether surprised that puritanic feeling, however doubtful about the other arts, has never had the smallest hesitation in condemning dancing to the fullest extent of its power.

Whatever influence the imputation of immorality may have had in the past, it is clear that at the present time we must look further to account for the slight esteem in which the art of dancing is, or has until very recently been held. Mr. Crawford Flitch finds the answer in the popular belief that dancing is less serious than the other arts. The view that it is less serious he traces to the fallacy that we are unconsciously apt to associate dancing with the ballroom and its surroundings—an amusement for our lighter hours, easily or comparatively easily learnt, and therefore unworthy of our serious attention. But, as he goes on to point out, there is really nothing in common between the dancing of the ballroom and the real art of dancing, which involves as long a training and as arduous and continuous practice as any of the other branches of art.

But, even given recognition of the serious study required to master the art of dancing, there is among many people a feeling that an art, which aims so entirely at the production of something merely pleasing for the moment, cannot really be a serious art. There is no doubt that we do take our art very seriously just now. We are by no means content merely to ask our artists to create beauty: we ask them to give us some message, to expound a social problem, or solve a moral difficulty. We like it didactic, producing practical value. There is hardly a novel written, or a drama produced, that does not deal with some intricate moral question. The most popular picture at the Academy is the problem picture; beauty is disregarded alto-

gether in frantic efforts to express meanings. Mr. Crawford Flitch, in an interesting passage, suggests that the present revival and development of the dance is a hint of a reaction against this tendency of latter-day art to usurp the function of the politician and social reformer.

The present renaissance of dancing has reached its fullest development in the performances of the Russian ballet produced by M. Diaghilev, which have had so marked a success during the past season. An admirable account of these performances is to be found in Mr. A. E. Johnson's "Russian Ballet," which will be a delighful souvenir to those who have seen them, and an attractive if somewhat tantalizing description to those who have not. The book gives not merely an analysis of the plots and an impression of the dances, but a sane and discriminating estimate of their value and meaning as works of art. Possibly Mr. Johnson has not quite a sufficiently sympathetic appreciation of the more academic types of ballet; but his study and criticism of the latest development of the Russian ballet are interesting and convincing. The numerous drawings of M. René Bull add a delightful decoration to the book; particularly beautiful is the frontispiece illustrating Mme. Pavlova in a conventional ballet pose.

The theatrical ballet is a comparatively modern institution, though naturally it is the outcome of early customs and ceremonials. The Court ballets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which arose out of the medieval mystery-plays, pageants, and masques, may be considered the immediate parents of the modern ballet. The earlier form was the opera ballet; gradually singing was omitted, and the wearing of masks abandoned. The heavy and cumbrous robes were next discarded, thus permitting freedom and opportunity for elaborating movements and steps.

England has never produced a great school of dancing, and has thus always been largely dependent upon the supply of dancers from abroad. One result, therefore, of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars was to cut off the supply of dancers. However, in 1821 a determined effort was made to secure some of the leading stars of the Parisian ballet—by no means an easy task, as they had received their training in the State Academy, and so were unable to leave the country without the special permission of the Government. Negotiations were, however, successfully carried through, and in that year the *danseur* Albert and the *danseuse* Noblet were engaged at salaries of £1700 and £1500 respectively. Their reception seems to have been enthusiastic to a remarkable degree. Society could think of nothing but their dancing, and the reign of the ballet may be considered to have fairly begun. For the next quarter of a century, its position was unrivalled and supreme. The advent of Mme. Taglioni raised enthusiasm to its utmost limits. In the early Victorian era the ballet meets us at every turn. The surviving reputation of Grisi, Elsler, and Cerito is in itself evidence of the widespread popularity of the ballet.

Taglioni was beyond question the most famous dancer of the nineteenth century, and must have been a wonderful artist; but how are we to compare her with the dancer of to-day? The art displayed by a dancer, like the voice of a great singer, becomes quickly but a memory. We can only form an opinion of relative merits by trying to weigh the enthusiasm of contemporaries. We have indeed no very clear idea of what the ballet itself was like at the time; but it is not improbable —as Mr. Johnson suggests in "The

Russian Ballet"—that it was the individual art, or skill, of the dancer that attracted the spectator, rather than the ballet itself in which she appeared. At all events, the ballet began to languish after the disappearance of Taglioni and the other great dancers of the time. Of those mentioned above, none were on the stage much after the middle of the century. In the absence of any dancer of genius, the tradition, though carried on with care, became lifeless. More and more importance became attached to mere skill and dexterity in executing difficult steps. The emphasis placed upon the *pointes*—dancing upon the tips of the toes—brought the performance perilously near a gymnastic feat. Although this step can be introduced with great effect occasionally to give a suggestion of lightness, it becomes quickly wearisome to the spectator when made the apparent object of the whole performance.

The final blow was given by the production of the operas of Wagner and Berlioz; and with the arrival of Jenny Lind singing became the popular craze in place of dancing. In the seventies the ballet was driven from the Opera House, and found a refuge in the variety theatres that were then coming into existence. Although this necessitated certain changes, the production of ballets at the music-halls undoubtedly had much influence in attracting a class of audience which would not naturally have been found at the old variety shows. In speaking of the English ballet in recent times, full tribute must be paid to the production of the ballets at the Alhambra and the Empire such as "Orfeo" and "Don Juan," and to the beautiful dancing of Mdlle. Adeline Genée—to whom English stage-dancing owes much of its recently reviving popularity.

In the meantime certain remarkable innovations were beginning to arouse fresh interest in dancing. Towards the close of the nineteenth century a widespreading movement was inaugurated by Miss Isadora Duncan. An American woman of remarkable personality and of wide activity, at one time desirous of initiating reforms in costume, hygiene, and morals, she finally came to concentrate her interest upon the dance.

"For her the dance is not merely the art which permits the spirit to express itself in movement; it is the base of a whole conception of life, a life flexible, harmonious, natural. In the development of the dance she found herself confronted by a dilemma. On the one hand was the limited technique of the ballet; on the other the unnatural contortions of the eccentric school. To return to the unconscious gestures of the people—that is to say, the crude, stereotyped gestures of the street—offered no way of escape. She found the solution in a return to the natural gesture of human life as represented in Greek life."[1]

Miss Duncan undoubtedly showed great power in expressing the depth and subtlety of spiritual moods; but upon her appearance in New York she had to meet the ridicule that usually greets originality. However, upon coming to Europe she soon gained recognition, captivating Berlin, Paris, St. Petersburg, and, to a less extent, London. Both in Germany and France the educational authorities were quick to recognize the possibilities of her system as a valuable training for children.

While to Miss Duncan must be given the credit of being the first to introduce the classical dance, it was Miss Maud Allan who succeeded in turning it into a popular enthusiasm. It is not intended to suggest that Miss Allan is a copyist: her art is truly original. It seems a case of the spirit of the times, causing, as so often hap-

[1] Modern Dancing and Dancers, p. 105.

pens, some new movement to start simultaneously in different places. Miss Allan treated the classical dance with a certain freedom and originality and with a personal touch that gave it a delightful charm. It was in the spring of 1908 that she first appeared in England at the Palace Theatre, and for the time carried London off its feet. Miss Allan's art is, so far as it goes, wonderfully complete; and in spite of many imitators has not yet been seriously rivalled. It is based more on music than on dancing in the ordinary sense, and tries to express not merely the rhythm of music but the melody and emotional content. Her interpretation of Mendelssohn's Spring Song was in its way perfect, and has not since been improved upon either by herself or by anyone else.

The use of the word "natural" in describing this kind of dancing has tended to a belief that it can be successfully undertaken by anyone with good looks and a fine figure. For a time it seemed that anyone—especially if with some social backing—need only go on the stage with bare feet and a minimum of clothing to secure instant success as a dancer. Indeed, signs are not wanting that the classical dancer may, for this reason, follow the skirt dancer into obscurity. The idea that anyone can ignore the restrictions of technique, and be a great dancer by merely following the momentary inspiration, with the happy spontaneity of a child, is no doubt seductive; but it is fatal to dancing. It is not uncommon just now to see performers on the stage who, under the blessed name of Greek art, do little more than run and romp about; young creatures in flimsy classic drapery, picking imaginary roses and throwing and catching balls. This is certainly very often pretty and attractive, and it can be made use of as a quite admirable educational exercise, but it is not a serious art. The art of classical, or, as it is often termed, "natural," dancing requires a long and arduous training; steps, movements, gestures, have to be elaborately studied. The perfect ease, which looks so simple and natural, can only be acquired by long and assiduous practice. There is here a natural analogy with the amateur impressionist painter, who, oblivious of the fact that the rapid, sketchy treatment which is so effective and looks so easy, is the result of prolonged study, thinks that he has only to be sketchy, slap-dash, and natural to be a great artist. Feeling is all-important, but it cannot be imparted until the language of the medium used for its expression has been thoroughly mastered.

Valuable educational developments have arisen out of this revival of classical dancing, and various schools have been started to teach it. Another interesting outcome has recently been seen in "Eurhythmics," of which M. Jacques Dalcroze has recently been giving attractive and interesting demonstrations. M. Dalcroze, a music-master, noticed that his students were able to sing more accurately if they were allowed to beat time with their own hands; there seemed to be an intimate relation between physical gesture and musical consciousness. This led him to the more careful study of rhythm, which of course is not merely the basis of music but of all art and indeed of life. By a series of physical movements and gestures the pupils became, as it were, endowed with a consciousness full of rhythmic melody, and thus able to express music as translated through their own emotions. The idea is that the individuality of the child is developed, and he is thus helped to realize himself. Without endorsing the somewhat extravagant claims made for the system, we can see that it would be a valuable training in con-

trol and development—a training which was, by the way, fully appreciated by the Greeks.

To Miss Maud Allan must also be given the credit of once more demonstrating how little the presence, or absence, of clothing has to do with essential decency. This question of clothing is very much a matter of custom and convention. A bathing dress is indecent in a ballroom, a ballgown in the streets. Our evening dress is horribly indecent to an Oriental, whose literature has to be heavily expurgated for our consumption. When Miss Maud Allan at first presented an art in which attention was frankly called to the beauty of the form of the human body, as well as its movement, the spectator was bewildered, and inclined to be a little horrified, but as he found the performance, so far from being the fleshly, sensual thing the puritan considers dancing, was really a spiritual and poetical performance, he soon ceased to be even surprised.

If, however, to any one person can be given the credit of reviving interest in the higher art of dancing in this country, the palm must unquestionably be given to Mme. Pavlova, whose dancing at the Palace Theatre has been a revelation. A description of her art is an almost impossible achievement, unnecessary to those who have seen her, useless to those who have not.

"Art so nearly perfect as hers [says Mr. Johnson] permits of no analysis and stultifies all effort at exposition. Pavlova's sheer grace can never fail of appreciation. . . . Her superb mastery of technique, if nothing else, must command admiration. But it is her distinction that she delights not merely the eye but the intelligence; behind all that she does is the artist's instinct of selection and co-ordination."

The Palace Theatre has the credit of providing the scene of Mme. Pavlova's triumphs, as well as of those of Miss Maud Allan. It is a significant fact, and one of good augury, that so much of the revived interest in this class of dancing has shown itself in the music-halls; for this means that it is not merely an artificially fostered society craze. The music-hall is in closer touch with average humanity and real life than the theatre, and if a thing appears there, and continues to appear there, it is evidence of a real popular want, and of a genuine widespread popular taste.

Mme. Pavlova, ably seconded by M. Mordkin, paved the way for the Russian ballet. Nevertheless M. Serge de Diaghilev deserves great credit, not only for his prescience in seeing that the psychological moment had come, but for his ability in carrying through the formidable undertaking of conveying to London a complete Russian ballet, drawn from the Imperial Ballet Corps of St. Petersburg.

The ballet in Russia had escaped the rather evil fortunes which had befallen it elsewhere. In that country it has always been fostered by the State, not merely as an exhibition of dancing alone, but equally for the music and the decorative treatment. Consequently the ballet in Russia has never been to the same extent an opportunity for individual star performers, but rather a complete whole with a definite unity of purpose, to which the energies and abilities of all are duly subordinated. Thus when it appeared in full form at the Covent Garden Opera House in the summer of 1911, there was all the charm of novelty to add to its other attractions. The rapidity and completeness of its success are evidence of the widespread interest that had already been aroused in dancing.

M. Diaghilev was fortunate in securing the services of two remarkable men, and a large proportion of his success must be attributed to the incom-

parable dancing of M. Nijinski and to the originality and power of design of M. Léon Bakst. M. Nijinski is much more than a dancer; an artist of great genius and originality, he has broken away from convention and tradition, and in the later ballets designed and invented by himself with the assistance of M. Léon Bakst he has produced a new and challenging form of the art.

M. Nijinski was born in Warsaw, and is now about twenty-four years of age. Both his parents were closely connected with the ballet, his mother being a dancer. At the age of nine he showed such promise that he was enlisted as a scholar in the College of the Imperial Ballet at St. Petersburg. The training is long, severe, and thorough, and he there gained that complete mastery of technical skill which places him—judged by mere ability—in the very forefront of the Russian dancers. But there is in his dancing, as Mr. Whitworth, in his study "The Art of Nijinski," suggests:

"something altogether unique—an exotic quality which cannot be measured or referred to any standard of purely technical excellence. . . . Another fusion of qualities most noticeable in the art of Nijinski, and most rare, is that fusion of utter freedom of movement with unfailing sense of decorative effect. Freedom of movement can be obtained, no doubt, by practice. And a good 'producer' may contrive that the main attitudes of a dance shall be correct in themselves and sufficiently beautiful. But with Nijinski, pose, attitude, seem to be an instinct rather than a lesson learnt, and even in the wildest orgie of motion his feeling for outline never fails. At any given moment his silhouette, could one descry it, would be found, I believe, to form a lovely pattern."

The earlier ballets, such as "Le Lac des Cygnes" arranged by Petipa, "Le Pavillon d'Armide," and "Les Sylphides" by Fokine, gave M. Nijinski full opportunity for displaying his powers in academic dancing, the result being very beautiful.

The next stage represents a series which are in a sense character studies of mood or feeling, such as "Petrouchka," "Cléopâtre," "Scheherazade," which enabled him to show his great powers of acting as well as dancing. It was "Le Dieu Bleu" with its poses and gestures drawn from Hindoo art, as Mr. Johnson points out, that marked the transition to the later development. This became still more marked in "L'Après-midi d'un Faune," where natural grace of movement is replaced by an almost exasperatingly artificial form of gesture and pose.

The following description of this play by Mr. Johnson gives a good impression of the effect:

"When the curtain rises the faun is discovered recumbent upon the top of a low eminence. The latter merely projects sufficiently in front of the back-cloth to form a ledge, and does not detract from the flatness of the scene. One sees the creature sharply in profile, with head thrown back, playing idly on a long pipe. A bunch of grapes lies beside him, and between this and his woodland music he divides his attention. When he turns from one to the other his movements are quickly executed, so that a sharp profile is almost continuously presented to the spectator.

While the faun is thus engaged there appear upon the scene below him three nymphs, advancing slowly with sideways gait, knees slightly bent, heads turned in profile, open palms upraised to shoulders. To them enters a fourth running swiftly, but in the same sidelong manner, and preserving the same stilted attitude as she moves. Another party of three is added, and the whole group of seven stand rigidly posed below, and a short distance from, the faun's elevated retreat. They are garbed in flowing draperies, with hair dressed close and tightly bound with fillets, and as they stand stiffly, angu-

larly posed, in an immobile row, they seem like figures detached from an antique bas-relief and propped before the footlights.

The pantomime, if such it can be called, between the nymphs and faun is quite impossible to describe. Such gesture as is sparingly used is strictly conventionalized, and the faces of the performers remain blankly expressionless. Nothing is allowed to detract from the stiff formality of their aspect. For all that the pantomime is curiously expressive. In his uncouth way, prompted by impulses only dimly comprehended, the faun seeks to woo the nymphs. They are startled and flee, but return almost as soon as they are gone, only to dart off again in sudden alarm. Curiosity alternates with shyness and fear. Only once are the quaint, indeed laughable, angular movements varied, when the faun, with quite electrifying effect, makes a single bound into the air."

The ballet had a great popular success, but largely this must be put down to curiosity to see the strange performance, and to the wonderful skill with which living dancers were made to suggest a frieze or bas-relief.

In "Les Jeux" the change has been carried even further, and it can only be called a ballet for want of any other name. There is no regular dancing, except for a few leaps and runs; the performance really consists of a series of postures and a queer, stilted kind of pantomime. The plot is very slight. The curtain rises upon a garden with formal beds into which a large ball drops. A moment later a youth and two girls come in to look for it, but quickly forgetting their object they start a juvenile flirtation. Soon all three are rapidly forgetting their surroundings, when a second ball dropping in frightens them away. Mr. Whitworth finds more in it than a scene of charming dalliance between a young man and two young girls. "It is flirtation in the abstract, the essence of delightful adolescence, clothed in the garments of to-day, but equally true of yesterday, to-morrow, and the day after." However, he allows that in spite of its exquisiteness there is a certain experimental feeling about it which marks it still as the work of a period of transition. But he argues that the apparent oddness of a ballet like "Les Jeux" is due not to perversity of subject, but to the employment of a dance-convention with which we do not happen to have been familiar. It is perhaps hardly to be wondered at if its reception was a kind of bewildered amusement. It was at first supposed that the strange angular and rectilinear movements, based upon an archaic type of Hellenic sculpture, which were introduced into the ballet, were simply intended to create the illusion of a particular period—just as in "Cléopâtre," where the movements were based upon the lines of Egyptian bas-reliefs. When, however, last year M. Nijinski produced "Les Jeux," a scene of modern life, and "Le Sacre du Printemps," a scene laid in early Muscovite times, both with the same curious, almost grotesque, gestures and poses, without any dancing in the usual sense of the term, it was recognized that he was definitely trying to introduce a new style, or æsthetic, of dancing. Mr. Whitworth, whose evidently fine appreciation of dancing in his study of "The Art of Nijinski" entitles his opinion to respect, finds in these ballets "a gradual evolution towards a new expressiveness and a new technique." But, interesting as these experiments are, one cannot help feeling very grave doubts as to their artistic value. It is indeed difficult to refrain from the obvious comparison with the claims, and the results, in certain recent developments in painting, broadly classed as Post-Impressionist. In the same way the writing on the subject is attractive, interesting, and

hopeful; expectation is roused to a high pitch. But the concrete results of the whole movement are bewildering, and to the ordinary spectator ugly and meaningless, suggesting indeed a return to the primitive art of children and savages. It is of interest to note that Mr. Whitworth describes Nijinski as an ardent admirer of Gauguin.

Broadly speaking, there is in both cases a rebellion against convention and a desire to get back to a simple expressiveness. In the early days of dancing there was no line drawn between the dramatic and mimetic side, but in modern times there is no doubt as to the tendency to divorce them so that the pantomimists, taking over all that served to make the ballet expressive, acted but could not dance; while the dancer concentrated all his or her attention upon the intricacy and accurate performance of steps, caring little for the meaning and appropriateness of the dance. It is no doubt against this mere delight in form and skill for its own sake that M. Nijinski is rebelling; aiming once more at a fusion between the pantomime and the dance, to restore to the ballet its expressiveness; abandoning the mere pleasure of rhythm, form, and color.

When considering this deliberately adopted later phase of M. Nijinski's art, it is of particular interest to note how his perfect beauty of movement has been replaced by curious angular poses and archaic gestures. Just as the Post-Impressionist painter intentionally discards his skill in drawing and produces pictures with distorted outline, with face and limbs deliberately made impossible, in order to attain a result which may be expressive but is certainly not beautiful, so M. Nijinski offers us a performance in which the graceful movements he can command so well are replaced by these quaint gestures; and we miss the beauty, though it is in the pursuit of beauty that he offers it to us. He is genuinely convinced, as he has himself told us, that it is the way to a more beautiful art—"La grâce, la charme, le joli sont rangés tout autour du point central qu'est le beau. C'est pour le beau que je travaille."[2] Just so with the post-impressionists there is a revolt against the surfeit of culture, a weariness of the accepted ideals of beauty, and an intense desire to put meaning into art, whatever it may cost.

It would seem, however, that M. Nijinski is falling into one of the many pitfalls that have already received the post-impressionist artist. He is trying to express in one medium things that belong to another branch of art. The sculptor in his bas-reliefs, the decorator in his frieze, can conventionalize, can omit, exaggerate here, diminish there; he can deal with his material, he has to represent movement by a single pose suggestive of movement; above all, by his power of selection and combination he can idealize the human figure, suggesting a beauty beyond that of any actual living body. The dancer, on the other hand, has to take the human form as it is, in the round, and the power he has in the rhythm of the ever-changing pose and movement is his medium of expression. In trying to treat the body as the sculptor treats it in bas-relief, the dancer is throwing away his best weapon to challenge comparison on ground where the sculptor is supreme. The result is unsatisfying and disturbing; at the best it suggests a cinematograph worked slowly so that one pose—beautiful as that pose may be—passes with a jump into another position. Just so the post-impressionist painter tries to express in paint and drawing moods or feeling that only music with its freedom from precise

[2] The Art of Nijinski, p. 100.

expression can adequately represent.

When we look at the wholly delightful creations which M. Nijinski has given us in "Le Carnaval," "Le Spectre de la Rose," "Les Sylphides," "Le Pavillon d'Armide," and so on, it is difficult to avoid a feeling of regret for the later phases we have just been discussing, and more difficult still to believe that this is the road to the finer development of the art of dancing.

To mention dancing at the moment without a reference to the Tango is impossible. The craze with which we are now overwhelmed is very much like that for the Polka, which carried all before it in the early forties of last century. *The Times* of those days wrote: "Our private letters state politics are now for the moment superseded in public regard by the new and all-absorbing pursuit, the polka, . . . which embraces in its qualities the intimacy of the valse with the vivacity of the Irish jig."

The Tango has had a somewhat mixed reception; its impropriety has been freely demonstrated by accounts of its lowly origin and dreadful associations. But this has really little to do with it; most dances have started from some lowly source before they reach the ballroom. Whatever the Tango may have been in its native haunts, there is little to be said against it as it is now taught and practised. The teachers of dancing have seen to the elimination of all taint of vulgarity, and with its hundred steps reduced to a manageable dozen it is now taking its place as an interesting variety in the society dance. Its source is still a matter of controversy. M. Richepin is reported to have traced it to the earliest times and connected it with the Pyrrhicha Saltatio. Another theory derives it from the Chica, an ancient and particularly unpleasant South American dance said to have come from the negroes. The more popular and likely view sees in the "Argentine" Tango a variant of the old Spanish Tango danced by the cowboys of Cuba and other States of Latin America.[1] Thence it was brought to Paris, where it underwent a metamorphosis and emerged purged and purified, fit for the usage of polite society. What is of more interest than its history and origin is its astonishing popularity. A large part of this may fairly be put to the credit of Mme. Pavlova, M. Mordkin, Miss Duncan, Miss Allan, and others who have helped so greatly to bring about the present renaissance of dancing. The growing interest in watching good dancing has not unnaturally produced a desire for performance. The old dances were losing their charm, they were not particularly pleasing to the onlooker, and all life had gone out of the ballroom. Consequently something new was hailed with delight; the renewed interest provided the stimulus to undertake the learning of the new steps; ability to perform them aroused the envy of others, and quickly the craze spread. The writer in *The Times* referred to above makes an interesting and ingenious speculation that the craze for the Tango is part of our new sense of pageantry, and in support of his theory he instances the renewed vogue of fancy-dress balls and their tendency to more elaborate ornateness. No doubt this is but one more of the signs of the times, the tendency to break away from old tradition, to find some new way of doing things—better if possible, original at all costs—whether in painting, music, dancing, politics, social questions, philosophy, or religion. In this stir of feeling there is a chance that art may again get into touch with life and become expressive of general moods and aspirations instead of remaining an empty effort after techni-

[1] The Times, November 10, 1913.

cal dexterity, where the end is lost sight of in a glorification of the means. This new kind of dancing which we have been discussing is at once an indication of and a stimulus to a fresh means in at least one of the arts. Mr. Crawford Flitch expresses in an ecstatic chapter, at the close of his admirable and discriminating survey of modern dancing, his enthusiastic belief in the future of the dance:

"When the choregrapher of genius arrives, he will think in gestures, as the musician thinks in sound and the painter in mass and color. And when he has realized the lavish abundance of his material, he will pour into it like a molten flood all that there is in the brimming life of our day to fire, to madden, to delight and to rive the heart.

"Then it will be the time of the other arts to look wonderingly upon this figure of the Dance, no longer straying timidly into their company, but coming upon divine feet with an assured mien and a mature grace, and each will borrow something from her untiring ecstasy."

If we can hardly endorse this glowing forecast, we can at least consider it a healthy sign that the public should care, and care enthusiastically, for so notable an innovation upon lines that promise valuable and interesting developments.

Felix Clay.

The Edinburgh Review.

THE REAL SYNDICALISM.

"Le Syndicaliste est le vrai Conservateur; il a sa racine dans le passé et son but dans l'éternité."

The word "Syndicalism" has been adopted into our language with a significance so fundamentally revolutionary and anarchic that the English reader may find it hard to believe that the words quoted above, with their suggestion of a conservative Syndicalism respectful of the past, were spoken at the congress of the most powerful Syndicalist organization in France.

Nevertheless, such is the case, and they were used in all seriousness as the sober expression of an obvious fact and not as one of those audacious paradoxes, with which an unscrupulous demagogue may seek to veil from his more timid followers the ruthless purpose that he pursues.

For years past, experts on labor questions have written of Syndicalism as though it were exclusively a destructive movement. They announce that Europe is being swept onward to the precipice of revolution, and that it is French Syndicalism that has let loose the avalanche. For them, Syndicalism necessarily implies the General Confederation of Labor and its revolutionary doctrines, the essential hostility of capital and labor, the policy of direct action that is *sabotage* and violence as opposed to legal methods, and the eventual collapse of society before the disintegrating general strike. In fine, they identify the whole Syndicalist movement with revolutionary Syndicalism.

Some five years ago this misconception was perhaps excusable. The strike riots of Draveil, Vigneux, and Villeneuve St. Georges had only just occurred. For months there had been a strike in the sand quarries of the district; a petty local affair it appeared, until one day the General Confederation of Labor decided to convert it into a demonstration of its power, and sent down from Paris hundreds of its most violent followers to aid the strikers.

The result was a long day's rioting. The Cuirassiers and the Dragoons sat in their saddles throughout the day

as steady as statues under a hail of stones and bricks, to say nothing of a fusillade of revolver-bullets which were far less dangerous, as they were fired from cheap weapons at long range.

In the evening the situation became really serious. The handful of troops had been encircled by the rioters and under the weight of numbers forced up against the wall of the railway-station.

The Cavalry charged again and again, but they could make no impression on the close-packed mob, and the rioters tore the men from their horses. At last the Infantry were ordered to fire into the crowd.

A single volley was fired and the rioters fled, leaving three killed and a large number of wounded in the streets.

Just after this occasion, the writer was dining in Paris with a Radical-Socialist Senator; among the guests were a distinguished officer in the French Army and one of the largest manufacturers in France.

Conversation naturally turned upon the bloodshed that had occurred a few days before. The politician, the soldier, and the business man, each of them representative of his class, all agreed that within three years the General Confederation of Labor would have overthrown the Republic, and that after a period of anarchy, order would be restored by a military despotism.

Five years have passed; the General Confederation has led its troops to the assault of society in a series of strikes, attacking whenever it could the essential organs of the State, such as the postal and railway systems, and all that has happened is that the forces of law and order have defeated revolutionary Syndicalism, and the General Confederation of Labor—divided against itself and openly convicted of corruption, with most of its leaders in prison for their anti-militarist propaganda—may at any time be declared illegal and dissolved.

It must be said that the attitude of the strikers at Villeneuve St. Georges had been impressive.

The day after the riots, the writer had a conversation with some thirty or forty desperate men, who had taken refuge in a dismal little wineshop that stands alone in the melancholy fields that lie between Draveil and Vigneux.

From every clump of trees that surrounded their refuge came the glint of helmets and rifle-barrels, and they knew that they were isolated without any possible escape.

They were full of suspicion, and a French journalist, who had been seen the day before taking photographs which they thought might be used as evidence against them, barely escaped with his life from the fists of an enormous *terrassier*. They had no money and nothing to eat; all the noisy agitators from Paris—at least one of whom was proved afterwards to have been in Government pay—had deserted them, and there was nothing left for them but to sit still and await arrest. Yet their spirit was not broken, and they showed with a touch of pride a pathetic collection of head-gear picked up on the field of battle, blood-stained caps, bowler hats squashed by the flat or cut open by the edge of the cuirassiers' sabres, and a very ancient top-hat with a bullet-hole neatly drilled through it.

"We fought hard, you see," said one of the men with a touch of pride. "We collected them, and tore out and burnt their linings with the makers' names so that they might not give a clue to the police."

They still believed in the idea that had driven them to a frenzied attack upon the forces of law and order, and still declared, with more or less confidence, that that very night the general

strike would break out in Paris, the Republic would fall, and the victory of the Grand Soir would be theirs.

It was perhaps hardly surprising that, at the time, we did not realize how few these enthusiasts really were and how soon they were to be disillusioned by the penalties that were their invariable lot, while the organizers of disorder went scot-free.

Though M. Pataud had not yet been thrashed with a contemptuous umbrella on the open boulevard by a recalcitrant member of his syndicate, and still had power to plunge us all into darkness, we should, when we were prophesying over the wine and cigars, have remembered the French peasant, his longsuffering conservatism, his thrift, industry, and common-sense, qualities that run strong and deep in the nation, while the vaporings of demagogues and the boastful threats of paid agitators are no more than evanescent froth and foam.

Now that the General Confederation of Labor has shown itself once and for all a fraud and a failure, and revolutionary Syndicalism is found to be a purely artificial phenomenon, it is easy to see things in their true proportion and to realize that the true Syndicalist movement was to be sought not in the towns but in the country, not in the factory but in the fields—in the domain of agriculture, the vital industry of France.

Even in point of numbers, the Syndicalist movement in agriculture is far more powerful than elsewhere.

The General Confederation of Labor at its zenith never claimed more than 300,000 adherents, while to-day the Agricultural Syndicates unite nearly a million agriculturists.

To comprehend the fundamental difference between the true Syndicalism and its spurious imitation, revolutionary Syndicalism, it is well to realize the part played by agriculture in the national life of France.

The writer travelled down to Nice for the Congress of Agricultural Syndicates, at which the words quoted at the beginning of this article were used, with an official of the Central Union of Syndicates, who is a native of Bordeaux, and, as the train drew out of the suburbs of Paris into the great cultivated plains which are the pride and wealth of France, the true note of agricultural Syndicalism was struck. "Voilà!" said my Bordelais friend with a sweep of the hand, "Voilà l'agriculture de la France."

The tone in which these simple words were uttered was far more expressive than the words themselves. A gesture, which included all behind the distant horizon marked by neat lines of rigid poplars, all the cornland and pasture, all the vineyards and olive-groves, all the fields and gardens within the wide frontiers of France, expressed that traditional worship of the soil, that sense of the ever-recurring miracle of the crops and seasons and all those homely notions of thrift and daily toil in the fields, which the French peasant still seems to feel as keenly as the Greeks and Romans, who transformed these simple emotions into rustic deities.

It was the same conception of the earth as the source of all fruitfulness and prosperity which a few days later, as a motor-car carried the members of the Congress through the white bare hills which bar the approach to Guillaumes (a little village in the heart of the Alpes Maritimes), called from a veteran agriculturist, who hailed from the fertile valley of the Rhone, a poignant wail of "Ah! cette terre, si nue, si blanche!"

The sight of uncultivated land was physical pain to him: he pestered everyone with questions to know if it were not possible to replant the barren

hillsides with trees, and broke into a long, confused story of how somewhere in his beloved Beaujolais a naked slope had been transformed into what was almost a forest. When, before we reached Guillaumes, he observed a melancholy plantation of undersized pines struggling desperately for life on an inhospitable and stony crag, and he was told that it represented a State attempt at re-forestation, the worthy man's gratification knew no bounds, and he swept off his hat with all the seriousness of a soldier saluting a forlorn hope.

Such is the spirit of the men who have adopted the theories of Syndicalism, and who regard it not as an agent of revolution and class war, but as an agent of social peace.

"The Syndicalist is the true Conservative with his root in the past and his goal in eternity."

The men who at the Nice Congress applauded this sentiment to the echo were worthy representatives of the agriculture of France. There were delegates from nearly every province in the country—from distant Finisterre, from the Vosges, the Pyrenees, Lorraine, and the Departments of the Centre; while local representatives of Provence and the rich Riviera coast were present in force. Side by side were sitting a Breton vicomte, the owner of large estates and an historic title, a young artilleryman, much occupied with his cumbrous sabre, who was the secretary of a local syndicate, a wrinkled Provençal peasant for whom the olive-tree was a thing to worship and die for, a vivacious wine-grower from the Hérault, whose black imperial wagged with indignation if any incautious Northerner reminded him of the existence of those Algerian wines that are cheaper than the wines of the Midi, a taciturn potato-grower from the Vosges, who looked for all the world like a retired general, and, on the last chair of the row, a parish priest from Lorraine, who, in the defence of his syndicate, had conducted, without legal aid, ninety-eight lawsuits against the authorities and lost only fourteen of them.

No branch of agriculture was unrepresented, and the potato-grower of the Vosges and the breeder of Brittany frankly admitted that they had something to learn from the methods adopted by the olive-, wine-, and flower-growers of the South. No class distinction existed. Among the audience were to be seen weather-beaten peasants with deep-lined mahogany faces, who, clasping a huge umbrella, listened with all their ears to the doctrines of agricultural Syndicalism, farm-laborers, small-holders, farmers of every class, and great landlords, bearing historic names, who have not hesitated to set themselves at the head of a movement which is based on the common association of all interested in the tilling of the soil.

This national movement which has succeeded in combining, without distinction of class or politics or wealth, those for whom agriculture is not an abstraction to be discussed or written about, but a vital part of their daily lives, began by setting before itself a humble practical purpose.

When, in 1882, the law conferred the privilege of association, so jealously guarded by the legislators of the Revolution, upon professional syndicates, an amendment, carried without discussion at the last moment of the debate in the Upper House, extended this privilege to the syndicates of agriculturists, and the French agriculturists were not slow to avail themselves of this advantage.

It is to the law of 1884 that revolutionary Syndicalism also owes its origin; but whilst its founders started from certain arbitrary notions, such as the inherent hostility of capital and

labor, and set to work to make facts fit their theories, the Agricultural Syndicates took facts as they found them and concentrated their efforts on the defence of the peasant and the improvement of his moral and material condition.

Naturally enough, the material side of the Syndicalist movement took the form of co-operation.

Co-operative societies for fire and cattle insurance, for the supply of chemical manure and the latest agricultural machines and generally for the satisfaction of the special needs of the agriculturist, were formed by the local syndicates.

The movement was supported by the "Société des Agriculteurs," the association of the great French landowners, and it was thanks to its influence that no class distinction was recognized, and that laborer, peasant-farmer, "métayer," and landlord were all admitted to the syndicates, and thanks to its initiative that all the efforts of the local bodies were centralized in the Central Union of Agricultural Syndicates, which has its headquarters in Paris.

A complete organization grew up.

In the commune, the small local syndicate founded the special co-operative societies needed in that particular place. These syndicates were grouped in district unions, which kept the syndicates in touch with one another and strengthened their co-operative action, in particular by re-insuring the risks accepted by their insurance co-operative societies.

Finally, the whole of this organization was guided and directed by the Central Union.

The success of the movement soon led its chief exponents to deduce certain general ideas from the facts of their experience, and to raise on the foundation of the work accomplished a solid structure of theories and ideals.

Had they not done so, they would not be the brilliant enthusiastic Frenchmen that they are. The Syndicalist idea, which was at first concerned with particular individuals and particular localities, grew naturally into a national movement, and to-day the Central Union of Agricultural Syndicates identifies itself with the agriculture of France and extends its forethought for professional interests to the interests of its country.

During the Agadir crisis, its lecturers, after speaking on the usual technical subjects, perhaps in some remote village, would be questioned by the peasants as to the international situation, and when, in reply, they spoke of patriotism and the honor of France that must, if need be, be defended by force of arms, their audience would rise and cheer them to the echo.

Agricultural Syndicalism is essentially a patriotic movement and is never weary of reminding the individual that his welfare and prosperity depend on the welfare and prosperity of the nation.

It is also a non-party movement.

Everything that has to do with politics is regarded by the peasant with the deepest suspicion, and his confidence in the syndicate would be rudely shaken if he ever found that it had a finger in the political pie.

Complete political neutrality is the watchword of agricultural Syndicalism. Its adherents may be Socialists or Conservatives, Radicals or Royalists, Clericals or Anticlericals, provided that they are professionally interested in agriculture.

In the village syndicate, the political feeling that runs so high between the schoolmaster and the chemist, who are almost invariably the electoral agents of the Government candidate, and the parish priest, who is the representative of the reactionary parties, disappears, and the political opponents, brought

into contact, learn to appreciate one another's good qualities.

The country curé is welcomed in the syndicate, as his superior education renders him an invaluable secretary, but any attempt on his part to use the syndicate for political or religious objects is promptly and sternly suppressed.

The Agricultural Syndicates have declared merciless hostility against all those petty intrigues and local jealousies which inspire the politics of the parish pump—"la politique du clocher." A few senators and deputies play a part in the movement, but they are only admitted in their quality of agriculturists. Certain politicians would have been happy to obtain the support of a disciplined organization which might, if it wished, control something like a million votes, but their advances have been politely and firmly brushed aside.

At a recent congress, a politician who began to glorify the work accomplished for agriculture by the Radical party was promptly called to order and reminded that the Radical party was an unknown quantity for agricultural Syndicalism.

As for the Republic, the leaders of the movement regard it with benevolent neutrality so long as it does not interfere with their labors, but they are fully aware that Syndicalism would work equally satisfactorily in a kingdom or an empire.

The royalist Action Française, indeed, has adopted a large number of its doctrines of co-operative professional action which arise naturally out of the medieval guild system.

It must not be supposed that the political indifference of the Agricultural Syndicates implies that they are without influence on Parliament.

On the contrary, their influence, both in the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, is, in matters affecting agriculture, very great, and steadily increasing, though unseen. They have already laid the foundations of a system of professional representation, and they look forward to the time when the consultation of the Agricultural Syndicates shall be made obligatory before any bill affecting agriculture can pass into law, and when their organization shall develop into an official system, representing the agricultural interests of the nation. They regard professional representation as the only remedy for "la crise du parlementarisme," about which so much has been written. Their leaders have supported the schemes of electoral reform based on proportional representation in the hope that they might do something to purify politics, but they only regard this reform as a preliminary step in the right direction. They hope some day to replace the representation of arbitrarily defined localities by the representation of professions and trades, each duly organized with its special syndicates and groups of syndicates.

An elector would vote as a banker or as a farmer or as a journalist, and not as a citizen of some electoral division, to the utter discomfiture of the professional politician.

The fundamental doctrines of Syndicalism and Socialism are irreconcilable. The Syndicalist bases his whole system on the encouragement of private initiative and leaves the widest autonomy to his local organizations. All his theories oppose the Socialist idea of State collectivism, and in the matter of agriculture he has already achieved considerable results in keeping State intervention within due limits. Independence, self-respect, and initiative are the qualities that he is endeavoring to cultivate in the nation, and he considers that these qualities are the first to disappear as soon as the idea of "L'Etat-Providence" is ac-

cepted. Thanks to his efforts, the collectivist programme, if ever it comes into the domain of practical politics, will find massed against it in a powerful organization, all the forces of the peasants in France.

A natural corollary of this attitude in so highly centralized a country as France is a steady and untiring propaganda in favor of decentralization.

The whole administrative system of France is concentrated in the Ministry of the Interior. The Minister of the Interior has as his direct subordinates the préfets, who are his agents in the eighty-six departments; they, in their turn, have as their subordinates the sous-préfets, in charge of the 362 arrondissements, and the last link in the chain consists of the mayors of the 36,192 communes of France. It is the perfection of this machine, which is at the disposal of the Government of the day, that causes the interference of party politics in every little local question and, reciprocally, the pernicious influence of local intrigues and jealousies on matters of national importance. To these abuses agricultural Syndicalism opposes its obstinate and organized resistance.

Above all things the Agricultural Syndicates are what would in English be called a school of character.

Their contribution to the material prosperity of French agriculture by their development of the co-operative system is expressed by a number of statistics, which are the surest demonstration of their vitality and activity.

Only the future can show if they are destined to found that abiding city which is their ideal—the State organized on a professional basis.

It was the writer's privilege to see for himself, at the Nice Congress of Agricultural Syndicates, the work that they had already accomplished in developing the intelligence, unselfishness, and national feeling of the peasant by teaching him the dignity of his profession, and showing him that he was working not only for himself, but for his fellows and his country.

The political situation provided an excellent test; the Three Years' Service Bill had not been voted, and perhaps those who have never been called upon to pay with their persons what the French call "l'impôt du sang" do not realize how vitally such a matter affects every citizen of France, and how self-sacrificing must be the spirit of a democratic country which is disposed to accept cheerfully so heavy an addition to its burdens.

The subject was discussed over the coffee and liqueurs in a little café at St. Raphaël, where some forty members of the congress were taking refreshment after a strenuous visit to the local co-operative institutions.

A small-holder from the Vosges, a man of imposing appearance taciturn and phlegmatic, with fierce military moustaches, who had come a two days' journey to attend the congress, started the conversation. "What do you Southerners think of the Three Years' Service Bill?" he asked, and then, as no one immediately replied, he went on, "We in the Vosges are ready. I have two sons who have not yet done their Service, but . . . nous sommes prêts."

A Southerner accepted the challenge. Small, vivacious, and talkative, with a little imperial that accentuated his swarthy complexion, he was the proprietor of a vineyard in the Hérault and a perfect specimen of the vigneron of the Midi, in every way a complete contrast to the man of the eastern frontier who had been the first to speak. With a wave of the hand he dismissed the Three Years' Service Bill as if it were of no more importance than that Algerian wine which the vigneron of the Midi hates so cor-

dially because it competes with his own.

"Never fear," he said airily; "that will be all right. We of the Midi are supposed to be wildly excitable and terrible revolutionaries. I admit we have occasionally forgotten law and order when we found that we were being ruined by these abominable Algerian wines and those fraudulent concoctions they make in Paris. But at bottom we are sound enough and very patriotic. You will find no shirkers in the Hérault when it comes to meeting the military preparations of Germany. Our young men will serve their three years without a word of complaint, and I am not at all sure that they will not be all the better for it."

"Ay," said the man from the Vosges in his laconic way, "better serve for three years and wear the French *képi*, than serve for two years and wear the spiked helmet of Germany."

"True," said a delegate from Nancy, "we of the eastern frontier learnt our lesson in 1870, and we have not forgotten."

At the side of the vigneron of Hérault was sitting the president of one of the wine-growers' syndicates which was supposed to be the most advanced and revolutionary of all those represented at the congress. He had created a sensation in Paris, a little time before, by declaring that the Midi would rise as one man and fight to the death against the Government and the rest of France, if the least-favored nation treatment were not imposed on Algerian wines, and if such stringent regulations were not devised for Morocco that it would be practically impossible to grow wine there at all. As far as wine was concerned he was an uncompromising revolutionary, but when it came to the national question of three years' service he said not a word in objection to the patriotic sentiments of his friend from the Hérault, and merely confirmed them with vigorous nods that set his long beard floating in the air.

A Nice representative, who was sitting opposite, broke into the conversation. He had not yet done his military service and was not best pleased at the idea of serving an extra year.

"It is not amusing," he remarked, "to spend three years in barracks, but, all the same, since we must, *nous marcherons!*"

An eager youth, who was next to him, declared himself absolutely delighted.

"I have always been mad about the army," he said, "and I should have volunteered for three years' service last year, if it had not been for my mother, who is a widow. No one can become a thorough soldier in less than three years, and if one has not learnt to be a thorough soldier one never gets the right outlook on life in the rest of one's existence."

The writer then turned to a vigneron from the Marseilles district on his right, who had remained silent throughout the discussion, and asked him his opinion. He was a magnificent specimen of the Southern peasant—his deep-lined face burnt mahogany-color with the sun that ripened his grapes and olives, his hair snow-white as befitted his seventy years, and his dark eyes peering keenly from beneath eyebrows that were nearly as bushy as his moustache.

With true peasant's caution, he thought the question over carefully, almost as carefully as he had considered which he should choose of the half-dozen wines that were offered him, weighing thoughtfully what possible interest a foreigner could have in asking such a question, and making up his mind as to whether that interest might be contrary to his own. When this important mental operation had

been accomplished, he remarked, "Three years' service—they don't like it."

After a pause, he added, "At least, if they don't mind now, they won't like it later."

After this oracular utterance, he took a deep draught of wine and shook his head over it sadly, as if it were a mere caricature of the nectar that his own vineyard produced. Then he retired into the impenetrable silence which he had maintained throughout the whole of the congress. From first to last it was only the twinkle of his shrewd eyes, or a smile that twisted all his wrinkles into new and complicated patterns, which showed that he was taking an intense interest in all the proceedings.

The non-committal reply of the Marseilles vigneron was caught up by a rich landowner from the Eastern Pyrenees, a man of seventy, who for thirty years had devoted his life to the cause of Syndicalism and had never lost an opportunity of grumbling at himself and his countrymen.

"Just at present," he grunted, "they are charmed with the idea of a third year in barracks, but we shall see. . . . The young men of to-day are worth nothing; they change their minds before they have made them up!"

"Come, M. L.," said a delegate from the Rhone valley, "you know that you are always complaining that nothing can make the peasant change his mind when once it is made up. Besides, if you had not believed in the young men of your part of the world you would never have given up your life to your syndicate as you have done."

"That only proves," was the reply, "that I am a stupid old fool, and I very much doubt if the new generation is any wiser than I am."

As a matter of fact, the tone in which M. L. grumbled was in itself an admission that the young men of the Pyrenees were ready to accept the sacrifice that France demanded.

After luncheon, the discussion continued in one of the large motor-cars that were conveying us to the inspection of a co-operative dairy, buried in the heart of the mountains.

"What," asked a Bordelais of a Breton, who was sitting beside him, "do the people of your part of the world in Finisterre think of the Government's proposals?"

"There will be no opposition at all in Brittany," was the reply; "our people say, of course, that they would prefer to serve for two years, but that, since it is necessary, they are quite ready to give an additional year of their lives to France. As a matter of fact, there is very little self-sacrifice in it at all. Every Breton admits that 'on est très bien au régiment,' and the elder men would simply laugh if their sons complained. 'Ben!' they would say, 'ils feront comme nous.' My deputy"—he mentioned the name of a member of the French Academy, one of the most respected politicians in France—"asked me the other day whether the vigorous campaign he has been carrying on in favor of the Army Bill will have done him any harm in the constituency. I told him at once that it would have quite the contrary effect. The only opposition will come from the departments of the Southwest, that are rotten with politics and have nothing to fear from a German invasion."

"Excuse me," said the Bordelais indignantly, "you are quite mistaken. I think you must forget that I come from Bordeaux. We, Girondins, are all of us patriots, and at heart we have always been Moderates. Bordeaux, through its municipal council, was the first town to declare in favor of three years' service."

"I apologize," said the Breton, smiling; "we are all inclined to im-

agine that it is only the departments about which we know nothing that are opposed to the Army Bill."

At this point, a great landowner of the Central Departments interposed. "In my district," he said, "the peasants are ready to serve for three years, because they are convinced that it is the only way of preventing war with Germany. They would do anything to prevent France being involved in another war. The peasants are not enthusiastic at the prospect of three years' service, but they will do their duty cheerfully. . . . I do not understand why some people are complaining that a wave of patriotism has not swept over the country at the idea of an extra year's military service. If you remember, we were patriotic enough when we were with the colors, but we used to count the days till we should be free of the regiment, and we certainly should not have been enthusiastic at the notion of a third year in barracks. It is not as though everyone was worked up to a white-hot pitch of patriotism by some great national peril."

"Surely," said the Bordelais, "the present attitude of France is infinitely better. There is no talk of *revanche*, and we shall not make the mistake a second time of bragging that we intend to march into Berlin. France is determined to defend herself if she is attacked and to make, quite cheerfully, every sacrifice that may be necessary, though, naturally, we should prefer not to make sacrifices. This is a state of mind that will last. Wild enthusiasm would soon pass away."

As M. Delalande, the President of the Central Union of Agricultural Syndicates, said, in his speech at the banquet of the congress: "In every agriculturist slumbers a soldier and, when necessity compels him to exchange the ploughshare for the sword, a good soldier, since he fights to defend the soil that he loves so well."

It is this spirit that the true Syndicalism encourages and develops, and it is as a school of character, patriotism, and self-sacrifice, and not only for the material advantages which it has conferred on French agriculture, that it has earned the gratitude of the nation.

H. Warner Allen.

The Cornhill Magazine.

OUR ALTY.

By M. E. Francis (Mrs. Francis Blundell).

CHAPTER I.

Peter Orrell's room opened into the kitchen, and from the bed on which he had lain so many weary weeks, and from which, as he was resignedly aware, he was destined never to rise again, he could see a corner of the range which his wife ever kept so brightly polished, and even the jutting-out shelf of the dresser beyond.

By an ingenious arrangement contrived by his grand-daughter Alty, he could see more—could indeed, after a fashion, take part in the family life in the adjoining chamber; for the cracked looking-glass, which had for so many years reflected his own homely face when he shaved on Saturday evenings or donned his voluminous black stock on Sundays, was now propped on a chair at such a cunning angle that, from the pillows where he lay enthroned, he could mark the goings and comings of his wife, and of the said Alty. When the outer door was open he could even obtain glimpses of

the fowl in the yard, and of the children wending their way to and from school.

On one particularly hot August afternoon Peter, gazing at this glass with something of the solemnly observant stare of a very young baby, noted that his wife, after doffing the "soft bonnet" which she had worn for the greater part of the day, stood for a moment, hands on hips, absorbed in apparently anxious meditation. She was a tall, spare old woman with a pale, strong-featured face curiously devoid of lines except in the neighborhood of the eyes: these eyes were of a very bright blue, and glanced keenly forth from under rather bushy brows.

As Peter stared, he observed that his wife's gaze directed itself absently, first towards his own door, then upwards at the ceiling, where, as he knew, the big ham was dangling from its hook—though both were beyond his range of vision—and then back again. Presently, mounting on a chair she took down the ham, and examined it critically, pursing her lips the while; unfastening the string at the shank end she investigated still more closely, bringing a finger and thumb to assist the research, and finally sniffing at it.

"Missus," cried Peter at this juncture: there was an anxious note in his voice.

Mrs. Orrell hastily fastened up the ham and replaced it on its hook; then, descending from the chair, she advanced to the door of her husband's room.

"Was thou callin'?"

"Aye," said Peter. "Will it keep, thinks thou?"

"What?" rejoined Mrs. Orrell in a tone of vexation, a faint color overspreading her face.

"Why, the big 'am—the 'am as we'n bin savin' up for my buryin'?"

"Thou'rt not dead yet," she rejoined sourly.

"Ah, an' more's the pity," observed Peter. "'Tis a wunnerful thing as the A'mighty doesn't tak' me. There's allus sich a dale larned us about makkin' ready—an' when a mon gets him ready an' lays fair tired o' waitin', he isn't took."

"Dear, howd thy toongue, for shame o' thee!" ejaculated the old woman in scandalized tones. "'Tisn't for thee to choose, nor me neither. Thou'lt goo when thy time comes. Thou'rt maybe noan so ready as thou thinks for, if thou lays there grumblin' i'stead o' resignin' thysel'."

Harsh though the words might sound, her expression was sympathetic, even tender, as she smoothed the coverlet, having first tidily replaced beneath the sheet the gnarled old hand that had absently crumpled it.

"I'm noan complainin', thou knows," observed Peter. "I'm only sayin' 'tis a wunnerful thing. I'm no good to nobry layin' here, wantin' sech a dale o' doin' for. Thou'lt not be drawin' so mich club money in a week or two—there's a big drop arter eight weeks, thou knows—an' weather's awful hot—I doubt that 'am won't keep. I took a reg'lar pride in gettin' pig ready, knowin' it 'ud be the last I'd ever fat, an' lookin' forrard to the neighbors sittin' round yon gradely 'am—an' you're welly through the last flitch, aren't yo'? an' I doubt the 'am itsel' is gettin' a bit touched at the shank end."

Mrs. Orrell's face was a study: if truth be told her husband had put her own thoughts into words. Since he was to go—and Doctor had said plainly there was not a vestige of hope of his recovery—and since he himself was weary of life, it did seem a pity that he should have to linger there till perhaps the means would be lacking to provide him with the few comforts which he still needed, and to conduct his obsequies with due decency. The

ham would *not* keep much longer, and that was a fact.

"There, give ower puzzlin' thy brains about what thou can't understand," she rejoined tartly. "'Tisn't for us to be namin' our wishes, I tell thee. I've knowed what it was to wish the A'mighty 'ud take me—twice i' my life I have—yet here I am, wick still."

Screwing his head a little round on the pillow, Peter gazed at her speculatively.

"Twice i' thy life thou did'st wish thysel' dead!" he said. "An' when were that, lass?"

"Eh, well, first time were when our 'Arry wer' brought home arter waggon went ower him. Eh, dear, on this very bed they laid him—sich a gradely lad, wi' his great long limbs and his shoulders—dost thou mind they big broad shoulders? They did reach reet across piller! And there he lay a corpse along o' the foolish trick I'd sauced him for ower an' ower again, settin' o' the shaft."

"Yigh, I mind that," put in the husband. He paused a moment, and then went on with a quiver of the lip: "Thou didn't ought to ha' wished thysel' dead, then—thou should ha' thought o' me. Was thou for leavin' me to lose son an' wife i' the same day?"

"Nay, 'twas but for a little time—I didn't r'aley wish to leave thee, an' theer was the little 'un to bring up. I had to live if 'twas only for her sake, wi' that silly little nesh mother o' hers droppin' off, too, when she met ha' been a comfort to us."

"So she met," agreed Peter, his voice echoing the resentment in hers. "Eh, she was but a nesh little snicket at best o' times—whatever our 'Arry seen in her I never could think—a town lass, wi' namby-pamby town ways! Well, our Alty doesn't favor her, as how 'tis."

"Nay, that she doesn't," agreed the grandmother, her features relaxing into a smile; "there's nowt o' the town about our Alty—country bred she is, an' champion. A gradely wench as iver I see."

"A gradely wench," echoed the old man, with a feeble chuckle; then his face clouded over again. "And when was second time thou did wish thyself i' thy grave, Missus?" he asked timidly.

"Eh, I reckon I shouldn't ha' named it to thee. We was all upset enough, an' 'twas none o' thy fault, though when a body can't read they should know better nor to set hissel' up wi' writin' his name."

"So I did," groaned Peter, "an' 'twas very ill-done o' me, I'll agree. 'Twas the only thing I could write—my name—an' when Miller Scarisbrick asked me so civil, and towd me it 'ud make no difference to me, I niver thought——"

"Nay, ye niver thought, but ye met ha' spoke to them as could think—ye met ha' named it to your own wife. I wouldn't ha' let ye sign no papers wi'out takin' advice. But there's no use talkin' about it. 'Tis done a many years."

"'Twas me bein' sold up as broke thy heart, owd lass," persisted Peter. "Them folks as sold us up, they hadn't mich mercy, had they? They met ha' left us a few things—them as yo' prized so mich, an' as had been in our family so long."

"Even the silver moog's gone," said Mrs. Orrell tragically. "I wer' thinkin' o' that jest now. The silver moog—thou'lt be the first Orrell to be buried wi'out the silver moog."

Peter feebly shook his head; tears welled into his eyes, and withdrawing his hand from beneath the sheet, he applied the back of it to them. Both the old folks were so much upset that the somewhat boisterous throwing open of the house door escaped their notice, and they started guiltily when the en-

trance of a tall girl interrupted their colloquy.

Alty Orrell was not only—as the old folks had dubbed her—a gradely wench, with fine regular features, a skin that triumphantly defied all vicissitudes of weather, and straight well-made limbs; she conveyed an impression of superabundant vitality. The forget-me-not blue eyes were ever changing in expression, the brown hair, with its gold tips, formed itself into crisp, independent-looking curls and tendrils without any aid from the hair crimpers so dear to the village soul; the broad shoulders were indicative of strength, the sunburnt hands could grasp a spade or an axe with the same ease as they plied a needle; indeed the tasks that fall to the man of the house on ordinary occasions were accomplished by Alty as a matter of course.

But neither of the above-named useful tools were now grasped by the brown hands which were crossed behind Alty's back: on the contrary, they held at the moment of her entrance the handles of a skipping-rope.

"What's to do?" she inquired, looking from one to the other with a droop of the lip that was like a baby's. "What's Grand-dad cryin' about?"

Mrs. Orrell turned round sharply, irritated at being caught in the act of "giving way."

"And whatever ha' yo' been about all this time?" she exclaimed, catching hold of the dangling skipping-rope. "Skippin'! when there's 'taters to get, an' a thousand an' one jobs to be done!"

"I didn't lose no time," returned Alty apologetically. "The 'taters is got—I have but to fetch 'em in. It didn't take me no longer to skip when I was runnin' down to ax Mrs. Wright if she wanted another couple o' chickens nor if I'd gone wi'out it. An' Joe Formby dared me to run there an' back wi'out breakin'."

"Eh, I wonder when thou'lt get a bit o' sense," rejoined her grandmother as she turned away.

Alty began to wind up her skipping-rope, eyeing the sick man the while. As soon as Mrs. Orrell was out of earshot she bent her face down to his.

"Why was yo' cryin', Grand-dad?" she asked with solemn tenderness.

"Eh, lass, thy Grandma an' me was just a-talkin' about the funeral," he explained. "I'd ha' liked to ha' had a gradely buryin', but I don't see how 'tis to be managed now. I never looked to howd out so long. I wer' tellin' Grandma she must look to drawin' less club money now, an' it's mich if the 'am keeps."

Alty cogitated for a moment or two; then her countenance cleared.

"There'll be the insurance money, ye know," she said with the bright air of one who makes a pleasant suggestion.

"Aye, I thought o' that, but I doubt we mustn't reckon too mich on't. I doubt, Alty, we must put the most o' that by. Grandma an' thou'll want it. There'll be another pig to get, an' meal an' all. Eh, yo' haven't mich to look on to, the pair of yo'."

"I can work," observed Alty confidently.

"Ah, so thou can, but thou'lt have a hard job to keep Grandma an' thysel' wi' ony mak' o' comfort. An' if I don't go soon I doubt I'll leave two-three little debts behind me. Four shillin' a week—that's all as we's be gettin' fro' club arter next week—that'll scarce keep me in medicine. Eh, love, I wish the A'mighty 'ud tak' me."

"Was it longin' to go as made yo' cry, Grand-dad?" asked Alty, with sympathetic tears starting to her own eyes.

"Maybe that, an' maybe thinkin' how different things is turnin' out from the way I'd reckoned," groaned he. "Grandma was sayin' I'd be the first

Orrell to be buried wi'out the silver moog."

"The silver moog!" echoed she.

"Ah, thou'lt scarce mind it—thou was but a little lass when we was sowd up. Yon moog had been in our family for over a hunderd year. Never used for nowt but baptisms and funerals. The neighbors used to borrow it for funerals when I wer' a lad—I mind that well. It used to be full o' mulled wine wi' spices an' thot, an' stood upon the coffin. Then jest afore funeral was startin' it was passed round, an' everyone supped at it. Ah, 'twas a nice custom—a good owd custom. I'd like to ha' kep' it up; but 'tisn't to be."

"Eh," cried Alty wrathfully, "I could do summat to yon wicked chap as robbed yo' o' your brass, Grand-dad —'twas worse nor thievin'—if he'd put his hand in your pocket 'twouldn't ha' been so bad."

"Naw, 'twouldn't," he agreed. "I was never one as carried mich i' my pocket, lass." He smiled feebly. "There, go an' help Grandma," he continued. "I can't talk no more jest now."

Before Alty had reached the door, however, he called her back.

"When thou'rt sayin' thy prayers toneet, lass, thou met say one for me. It'll happen put the A'mighty in mind o' me. I reckon He's forgot about leavin' me layin' here so long."

Alty gazed at him for a moment in silence, her eyes very large and solemn; then drawing a sudden quick breath she nodded.

And that night Peter Orrell, gazing with dim eyes at the looking-glass which chronicled for him the doings of the little household, noted that when his missus rose from her knees at the conclusion of the evening devotions, Alty remained a little longer, her folded hands resting on the table and her bright head bent over them, while her lips moved in supplication.

"That's for me," he said to himself. "Happen the Lord 'ull take me now."

CHAPTER II.

It was supper-time at Hawthorn Farm, and John Fazackerly sat facing his mother at the oak table in the centre of the large, cool living-room. The table itself was already spread for the meal: a wooden bowl of potatoes "in their jackets" being flanked by an over-flowing salad dish and a pickle-bottle; the beer-jug stood conveniently to John's hand; nothing was wanting but the joint itself, which Maggie, the maid, was in the act of dishing up.

Mrs. Fazackerly was a tall, immensely stout old woman—so unwieldly, in fact, had she become of late years that, though hand and brain and tongue were as active as ever, she was obliged to depute most of the work to the two servant lasses, whom she kept continuously on the run from morning until night. The latter averred that the missus's eyes could fair see round a corner, and as for her voice, they could never get out of the sound of it. Yet in Mrs. Fazackerly's eyes these latter-day lasses were scarce worth their salt, not to speak of the "good wage" which she seemed to think was bestowed on them as a purely gratuitous act of generosity. It was a constant cause of complaint with her that Providence had not seen fit to bless her with daughters of her own. John was well enough, a good son, and like to make a good husband one of these days, when it was to be hoped he would bring home some stirring body to lift the burden from his mother's shoulders; but if he had sisters—here Mrs. Fazackerly was usually taken with one of the bad fits of coughing which so frequently deprived her of speech just as she was working up to the most interesting point

of her discourse—and she could only roll her eyes, and thump her broad chest, and finally gasp out, brokenly, that "in *that* case folks 'ud ha' been like to see summat!"

John himself was a big, burly fellow of thirty-five or thereabouts, with reflective blue eyes, and hair which had never lost the flaxen tint of childhood; even his beard was but a little darker in hue, while his complexion would have been fair had not sun and wind tanned it to an even brown.

He was preparing to dine in his shirt-sleeves for greater comfort and coolness, and had even rolled these up high above the elbows, displaying a forearm which would have done credit to a giant. His open collar revealed a neck powerfully moulded, and, an artist would have said, beautifully set on. There was nothing clumsy about the figure constructed on such massive lines, nothing coarse—even the hand which toyed absently with the empty tumbler was finely shaped as well as strong.

"Be careful wi' that gravy," called out Mrs. Fazackerly, for the third time. "Thou'rt gettin' dish too hot—I can smell it from here."

At this juncture came a tap at the house door, and the old lady paused. John, too, turned his eyes meditatively towards the doorway, and noted that a shadow from some unseen person standing without, was projected across the narrow passage and went climbing up the opposite wall. A feminine somebody, for even in the unreal presentment which met John's gaze, could be noted fluctuating streamers of hair lifted by the sportive antics of the breeze.

The tap came again, and John weighed within himself the advisability of either inviting the newcomer to come in, or proceeding to the door to ascertain her requirements.

Having decided on the latter course—for he was ever a man of few words—he rose, made two strides across the room, and presented himself in the passage.

Alty Orrell stood without, bareheaded, and wearing her working dress; a glance ascertained the fact that her eyes were red with crying.

John, as has been said, was not given to superfluous speech, but he looked at the girl kindly, making an inarticulate but sympathetic sound, which she understood.

"Yo've heerd?" she said.

John nodded.

Alty sobbed again, this time so loudly that Mrs. Fazackerly, hearing, called to her compassionately from the living-room.

"Come your ways in, my dear; come in and set yo' down. 'Tis what we mun all come to, first or last, an' your poor grandfeyther wer' an awful sufferer. I'll be bound he wer' fain to go."

"He wer'," agreed Alty; "he—he—eh, Mrs. Fazackerly, he wer' that anxious to die he axed me to put the Lord in mind to take him, an' I did, an' now I wish I hadn't!"

"Eh, well, you acted for the best, love, an' yo' couldn't do more," said Mrs. Fazackerly, with her eyes fixed on the joint which Maggie at that moment brought in. "Another plate and knife an' fork, Maggie. Yo' mun stop an' have a bite wi' us, Alty. I doubt things is a bit topsy-turvy at your place—it'll do you good to pick a bit o' summat solid at arter all that cryin'."

John endorsed this statement with a sympathetic "Ah, sure," and, laying his hand on the girl's shoulder, forced her into a chair.

"Thank yo' kindly," said Alty, looking from one to the other, "but I can't stop. We've had our tea, Grandma an' me, an' there's a deal to be seen to. We are b'ilin' the big ham to-night

—'twas one o' the last troubles Grandfeyther had, thinkin' it wouldn't keep —an' we've killed a pair of chickens, an' I'm jest off to village to buy a couple o' bottles o' wine."

"Wine!" echoed Mrs. Fazackerly in a scandalized tone. "What should ye want with wine? A nice drop o' beer is good enough for most folks to be buried wi', an' *I'm* one as holds wi' havin' tay, an' nowt else."

"'Tis the custom in our family," rejoined Alty, with a little toss of the head. "There was allus a moog o' spiced wine stood upon the coffin when wan o' the Orrells died—Grandfeyther was awful undone thinkin' about our silver moog goin' wi' the rest o' the things at the sale."

"Ah, 'twas true," agreed the old woman in a reminiscent and mollified tone; "they was a great owd family, the Orrells was. Eh, 'twas a downreet pity they should ha' come down i' the world same as they did. I can mind about the silver moog. I mind my husband goin' to your great-grandfeyther's funeral when we was both yoong, an' tellin' me about it when he come home."

"Well, the reason I come round here to-night," said Alty, reddening up to the roots of her hair, but making the plunge boldly, "was to ax for the loan o' Mr. Fazackerly's silver moog as he won at the show."

She nodded towards the polished mahogany dresser, where a cup of the kind familiar to frequenters of agricultural exhibitions proudly graced the topmost shelf.

"Yon cup?" said John, turning his eyes in that direction.

His mother laid down her knife and fork and gazed at Alty with indignant surprise.

"My word!" she ejaculated, "that's a pretty thing to ax! I'm sorry your grandfeyther's dead, Alty, I'm sure—very sorry I am—I've allus had a feelin' 'eart for everyone in trouble, but I will say I call it pretty cool! Yon moog doesn't reetly belong to my son —not yet; he's got to win it three times runnin' for the best mare an' foal—it's mich if he gets it next year. I don't know as he'd have any reet to lend it. Supposin' ye let it drop an' sp'ilt it, where 'ud we all be?"

"I wouldn't spoil it," faltered Alty. "I'd be awful careful, Mrs. Fazackerly. I'd carry it down to our place myself an' wouldn't let nobry else touch it nobbut when it's passed from hand to hand. When Grandma an' me had laid him out I promised Grandfeyther he should have that moog—I promised him afore he deed—I've never broke my word yet to him, or anybory else."

She dashed away her tears as she spoke, and John, gazing solemnly at her, finished chewing the morsel in his mouth, swallowed it, and then, rising, took down the cup from the shelf and handed it to her.

"Here," said John, and jerked his thumb meaningly towards the door.

"Eh, thank you, I'm sure," gasped out Alty, wrapping up her treasure hastily in her apron and flying away with it, lest Mrs. Fazackerly's remonstrances should cause him to change his mind.

John returned to the table and held out his plate for another slice; then, as his mother was seized with one of her paroxysms of coughing, he put it down again and waited patiently till she had finished.

"I suppose there's no use talkin'," began Mrs. Fazackerly, when she could at length articulate; this was a mere figure of speech, for it was her intention to talk a great deal, and, as a rule, John listened quietly enough, but on this occasion, to her surprise, he cut her short.

"Not a bit," he said resolutely, and held out his plate again.

His mother cut off a substantial

slice before she resumed, throwing a world of emphasis into the speech, curtailed out of respect for a certain expression in John's eyes which denoted that he was in earnest.

"It's mich if ever yon moog comes back safe!"

"Nay," returned John, good-humoredly, "it'll be reet—yo'll see."

His prophecy proved true: not only did the cup come back in due course without harm, but so resplendently polished that even Mrs. Fazackerly's heart was touched.

"My word, it looks better nor it did before! Well, my dear, nobry can say as yo' haven't done the best yo' could for Grandfeyther. 'Twas a very nice buryin'—they all said that. I could ha' wished to ha' gone mysel', only I can't get about, but ye had a mony folks, my son were tellin' me."

"Yes," said Alty; "all the neighbors came. They was all very kind. Eh, I could never tell yo' how kind everyone was, Mrs. Fazackerly." Her lip trembled. "Grandma an' me, we was frettin' oursel's, thinkin' we wouldn't be able to have things gradely—Grandfeyther havin' been lyin' so long, an' us bein'—well, not so very well off, ye know—but everyone was wonderful kind."

"Was they?" said Mrs. Fazackerly, with a benevolent assumption of curiosity, though she knew as well as Alty exactly what each family in the village had done to enable the bereaved old woman and her grand-daughter to give old Peter "a nice buryin'," without encroaching on the insurance money. She knew that Mrs. Houghton had contributed a black dress-piece and that Mary Balshaw had made it up for Alty; she was perfectly well aware that the tablecloth had been lent by Mrs. Birch, while the crockery-ware had been carried over after dark from the Prescotts' house. Mary Tyrer who kept a sweet shop at the top of the village had contributed the apple-turnovers, while Mrs. Fazackerly herself was responsible for a fine piece of beef and a gallon of home-brewed ale.

But Mrs. Fazackerly now put on an expression of pleased surprise, and Alty, though not one whit taken in, repeated her assertion that "everyone was wonderful kind," in the tone of one who conveys an agreeable piece of information.

At the funeral itself, the same procedure had been followed; the neighbors offering congratulations to their hostesses, as though totally unaware of the efforts made by each and all to conduce to the success of the entertainment—while Mrs. Orrell and Alty accepted them with grave dignity. It was, indeed, somewhat of a breach of etiquette to have confided to Mrs. Fazackerly the passing fear which had agitated her grandmother and herself that they should be unable to have "everything gradely."

"Ah," said Alty, "they *was* kind. It all passed off very nice, Mrs. Fazackerly."

She gave a retrospective sigh of content, followed by a quick sob.

"'Tis all over an' done wi' now, an' poor Grandfeyther lays underground, an' there's nowt to look forward to!"

"Coom," said Mrs. Fazackerly, with a roll of the head destined to recall Alty to a more fitting state of mind, "that's no way to talk—there's your dooty to look for-ard to. I doubt ye'll find it hard enough to earn your livin' now—an' your Grandma can't do mich to keep hersel'!"

Alty dried her tears and appeared to brace herself.

"That's reet," she agreed. "Ah, it'll be a bit 'ard to make ends meet, but I like work, Mrs. Fazackerly."

The old lady nodded with a grim smile.

"Ah, I thought you did," she agreed

approvingly. "There isn't many as do, these day" she added, raising her voice for the benefit of Maggie and Jinny in the back kitchen. "*I* was one as liked work when I was yoong and I can tell yo' it cuts me to the 'eart to have to set here, helpless, and see work neglected."

She paused a minute, her ears evidently pricked to catch any sound which might be supposed to indicate that her shaft had winged its way to one or other of the recalcitrant hirelings next door; but, as none came, she resumed with a toss of the head: "They'll be hangin' about i' th' yard takin' the lads off their work, I shouldn't wonder. See thou, Alty, do yo' notice anythin' wrong wi' window?"

"I see a cobweb," rejoined Alty, after a swift glance, "up in yon left-hand corner, an' a smear i' th' middle frame; 'twasn't polished last time window was cleaned."

"Reet!" rejoined Mrs. Fazackerly. "Eh, dear, I've been lookin' at that all th' mornin' ready to bust wi' vexation. Look round room now, lass; can yo' see aught else wrong?"

"There's dust i' th' corners," rejoined Alty promptly, "an' fender bar's rusty, an' the corner o' the sofa cushion's ripped."

"No, is it?" returned the old woman, with concern. "I didn't chance to notice that. Fetch it over to me, love; I can set that to reets myself as how 'tis."

She had put on her glasses and selected needle and cotton from the basket beside her by the time Alty had carried over the cushion.

"But dusty corners and rusty fender-bar is what I can't mend. Now, see, Alty, how 'ud it be if yo' was to come an' live here and see to things for me. I wouldn't call yo' a sarvent nor treat yo' as such. Nobody knows better nor me what good stock yo' come of, an' how 'tis none o' your folks' fault if yo'n coom down i' th' world; but I'd pay yo' enough to keep your Grandma in some decent lodgin'. Theer's a many in the village as 'ud be glad to take her in. I doubt yo'll not be able to keep on yon little cot as how 'tis; let rent be as little as it may, it 'ud make too big a hole in the few shillin's a week yo'll be able to scrape together. Ah, I'd pay yo' enough to keep the owd body in comfort an' a few shillin' ower for yo'r clothes—an' that impudent snicket Jinny could look out for another place."

But Alty shook her head.

"I couldn't leave Grandma," she rejoined firmly, "thank yo' kindly all the same, but we mun just try to manage someways. Grandfeyther wouldn't ha' liked us to give up our little place so long as we can make shift to pay rent. Grandma couldn't make herself 'appy wi' strangers. She's a bit dunchy by times, Grandma is—'tisn't everyone as 'ud have patience wi' her."

"Why, how i' the world d'ye count to get your livin' then?" queried Mrs. Fazackerly tartly. "Yo've no way o' takin' in a big wash at yon little place, an' it 'ud want to be a big wash to keep the two of ye; an' if yo' won't go out to sarvice——"

At this moment John entered, and after nodding to Alty took up the silver mug, examining it with approval.

"'Tis bright enough," he remarked, addressing his mother, his manner implying "I told you so."

"Ah, 'twill do," rejoined Mrs. Fazackerly sourly. "Alty can do well enough; I've nowt to say again' her for that—she's not one to spare hersel', but I'm jest agate o' tellin' her she's a silly wench. I've made her a good offer an' she'll not take it."

"Won't yo' coom, Alty?" asked John, turning to her with his kind smile.

Alty drew a long breath, turned

scarlet, and then said, speaking very fast:

"I'll coom if yo'll tak' me on i' th' yard in Jim Shaw's place."

John stared, while his mother ejaculated: "Hark to that!" in such a scandalized tone that everyone but Alty would have lacked courage to proceed. But she went on bravely:

"'Tis lad's work, but that work is what I'm most fit for—Grandfeyther always said so. As soon as I heard as Jim Shaw had 'listed I jest thought I'd try for the place. I can do all that he did. I can drive milk-cart, an' feed chickens an' pigs——"

"Clean out sties?" inquired John, with a twinkle in his eye.

"I could," rejoined Alty defiantly. "I clean out ours at home—an' I can milk, an' carry in coal."

John made an inarticulate sound, and Alty raised her voice to drown it.

"I could! I'm as tall as Jim Shaw and stronger. You feel my muscle, Mr. Fazackerly."

With her blue eyes blazing with excitement in her flushed face Alty made a step towards him, innocently extending an arm which looked stalwart enough beneath its thin cotton sleeve.

"Feel!" she repeated eagerly; and as John gravely complied, she jerked up her forearm swiftly after the recognized fashion, turning about her elbow so that John might thoroughly appreciate the magnificent development of biceps beneath his investigating hand.

"My word!" he exclaimed admiringly; "my word, you'd fell an ox, lass—I've a good mind to take yo' at yo'r word."

"Well, an' that's a pretty thing!" exclaimed Mrs. Fazackerly, with a shocked air. "I made her the offer o' livin' here more like my own dowter nor a sarvent. I said"—here Mrs. Fazackerly assumed the exact tone which she had adopted in making her proposal to Alty—"'I'll not call yo' a sarvent nor treat yo' as sech, but I'll pay yo' enough to keep yo'r Grandma in comfort with a few shillin' ower to buy yo' clothes. Yo' can easy find a decent lodgin'.' 'No, I couldn't leave Grandma. She couldn't make herself 'appy wi' strangers.'" This quotation was made with as close an imitation of Alty's voice and manner as the old lady could achieve; then she continued in her own tone: "Why, how d'ye reckon to get your livin'?" Then speaking with an emphasis which betokened volumes of contained indignation: "By doin' lad's work!"

"Well," returned Alty, holding her ground, "there's no disgrace in that, Mrs. Fazackerly. I'm not to be held accountable for not bein' born a lad any more than Mester Fazackerly is to be held accountable for not bein' born a wench. I've heerd yo' say mony a time yo' wished he had. A woman can manage outside better nor a man can do inside."

Mrs. Fazackerly sat tongue-tied while John's roar of laughter resounded through the room.

"I doubt she had yo' there, owd lady," he remarked as soon as he could speak.

"I've reckoned it all out in my mind," went on Alty, in haste to prove her case before it could be further damned with disapproval. "I'd go an' coom jest as ony workin' man 'ud do; I'd manage all the little jobs at home—seein' to the wick things, an' choppin' sticks an' that same as I've allus done. Grandma 'ud keep the house, and I'd be home at meal-times to hearten her up; an' I'd be bringin' her home my wage every week—'twouldn't be like goin' out to sarvice, or even livin' here. Grandma 'ud content hersel' very well."

Mrs. Fazackerly was opening her mouth to speak, but was overtaken by a spasm of the enemy, and fell to

coughing instead, her eyes rolling fiercely the while from her son to Alty and back again.

For once John took no notice of her distressful plight: he smiled on Alty instead, and said firmly:

"That's settled then; yo' can start o' Monday."

(To be continued.)

SOME NOTES ON BALZAC.*

Although it was published nine years ago, Miss Mary F. Sandars's *Balzac* remains a valuable piece of work. In the first place it gives, without too lengthy criticism of particular works of Balzac, a most readable account of a complicated and interesting life. In the next place, it is based on those *Lettres à l'Etrangère* which Balzac wrote to his Polish friend, Madame Hanska, in the absence of which we have no means of ascertaining the inner life of the distinguished author. Books like those of Sir Frederick Wedmore in the "Great Writers" series, or Miss Wormeley's Memoir, have become out of date. Mr. Saintsbury's various critical notices retain their original value, but, of course, the real source of much of our present knowledge is due to the collections of M. de Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, together with various pamphlets replete with all the conscientious zeal of a thoroughgoing admirer. As Miss Sandars herself notes, Dr. George Brandes has written some valuable chapters in one of the volumes of his *Main Currents of Nineteenth-Century Literature*, which, however, do not deal with the details of the novelist's life, but rather with the position which he holds in modern literature.

There are several outstanding questions about Balzac, the answers to which determines the general estimate we form of him. I begin with one which goes to the root of the matter. Is it in any sense true that Balzac founded a school? If we take the ordinary views held about him, the current descriptions which find favor with hasty writers, we shall conclude that he was the father of a modern school of realism, and that in this sense he is of the greatest importance in the history of that change from romance to naturalism which explains some of the aspects of contemporary novelistic literature. Nevertheless, it cannot be maintained that Balzac ever founded a school. Such honor, if honor it be, might attach to Zola, or possibly even to Maupassant, or still more, perhaps, to Stendhal. It might even be held that Flaubert's scrupulous study of style has not left itself without witness in after years. But Balzac remains alone in his own peculiar essence, a solitary, masterful figure, too different from anybody else to be associated with followers and imitators. The word realist is not very happy as attached to him. He was, indeed, as we shall presently see, a naturalist, mainly on the ground that he appreciated and understood the scientific attitude towards the world, and applied many of its methods to the composition of his romances. But of direct and immediate influence it might not be too hazardous to say that evidences are to be found rather in Russian literature than in those more nearly associated with ourselves. There is something of Balzac in Tolstoy; there is obviously a good deal in Dostoieffsky. At all

*An Introduction to a new edition of "The Life of Honore de Balzac," by Miss Mary F. Sandars. (Messrs. Stanley Paul and Co.)

events, the spirit is the same, the spirit of the earnest worker who refuses to shut his eyes to the sordid details of human life, any more than—though this more reluctantly—he will miss the more brilliant episodes of the great panorama.

The fact is, of course, that by describing Balzac as a realist we miss at least one half—it may be the most important half—of his character and personality. When Victor Hugo delivered his funeral discourse on Balzac in 1850, he declared his work to be the issue of "observation and imagination." The last element is quite as significant as the first—all the more significant, perhaps, because it is sometimes forgotten in the common estimation of Balzac. Who was the writer Balzac especially admired, whom he thought that he was imitating? Sir Walter Scott—not an author who could obviously be associated with a school of realism. When Balzac set out to produce a novel, he employed his acute perceptive gifts in the amassing of an enormous volume of details. Then, when his materials were complete, he allowed his imagination to wander at will, almost to run riot, in the composition of what was sheer romance. When he creates—and he is one of the most indefatigable of real creators—he is constructing, not so much an actual world as an ideal world; quite a possible world, but not an actual one. In all his themes, whether he is treating of an earlier age or of a new age, of the capital of France or of the life lived in its provinces, of the dominion of love, or the still more urgent and irrepressible dominion of money, the sphere into which he translates us is not exactly that with which we are most familiar. It is an imaginative sphere, never outraging our sense of verisimilitude—because Balzac knows how to communicate to it touches which make it alive—but still, if we examine it closely, widely different from the things we know.

When this much has been said, it is absolutely necessary to add that he was equally an observer, extremely conscientious and exact, amassing minute incidents and phenomena, both necessary and unnecessary. That, of course, is obvious to the most careless reader of his works. Indeed, the elaboration of his structure often offends a reader. He is apt to get tired of the accumulation of detail, wondering when the story is to become interesting, bored with the endless preparations, anxious to arrive at the underlying romance. I suppose this general description would hold true of nearly all his novels. It is certainly true of such different works as *La Peau de Chagrin*, *Eugénie Grandet*, *La Cousine Bette*, *César Birotteau*, *Le Cousin Pons*. The combination of these two gifts—that of patient observation and of a wayward, but always brilliant, imagination—makes him difficult to class with other writers, gives him, in fact, the unique position which he holds. Even in *Le Père Goriot*, which perhaps is better known in England than any of his other novels, he exhibits the same mixture of what we have now been accustomed to call realism, and of what Victor Hugo would certainly call romance. It is probably in virtue of his imagination that, when he sees a workman and his wife go home from the theatre in Paris between eleven and twelve at night, he is able to reconstruct for us all their inner history, just as though he had followed their humble careers from the very beginning.

The influence of scientific conceptions upon his work is equally obvious. He did not think much of history and historians, and he was certainly in no vital sense the historian of his age. But he was, undoubtedly, the scientific student of the times in which he lived,

and he carried out his study on scientific lines. Dr. Brandes has some useful remarks on this matter. He begins by quoting a phrase of Balzac: "The difference between soldier, laborer, official, lawyer, idler, scientist, statesman, merchant, sailor, poet, priest is, though more difficult to grasp, quite as great as the difference between wolf, lion, horse, raven, shark, seal, and cow."

There is, in point of fact, a unity of structure combined with endless diversity, in all the different species; but the standpoint from which the novelist views society corresponds very acutely to the standpoint from which the man of science investigates nature. Aristotle said long ago that in all mortal things there is to be found some element of wonder. Balzac would add that the novelist must be as neutral to all the various phenomena of the human world as the scientist is to the objects of his patient analysis and investigation. When people look with a certain distrust at Balzac, when they are disposed to charge him with being deficient in moral principles, what they really are referring to is this same calmly neutral attitude—which the scientific investigator, as a matter of course, assumes. To Balzac, as to the naturalist, nothing is too small, nothing too great, to be examined and explained. He never allows himself to be so led astray by either excessive interest, or by disgust, as to give otherwise than a truthful description. Nor does he ever moralize or condemn. A fact or an incident which, regarded from one point of view, is rightly stigmatized as contemptible, or foul, or criminal, is from the standpoint of Balzac a phenomenon, like other phenomena, to be understood and explained, perhaps to be recognized as the same in kind with that brilliant and successful vice which we find in history attached to great conquerors, or, sometimes, great statesmen. The latter sin on a large scale, the humbler criminals sin on a small scale. But it is a difference of degree, not of kind. In this aspect, it is true, Balzac anticipates a good deal of modern literature which refuses to call anything common or unclean, although, perhaps, it is not based on the same amount of comprehensive study which Balzac thought necessary for the novelist's art.

There is another point which strikes one in the procedure and technique of Balzac. It is not an uncommon assertion about him that you find him whole and entire in every part of his work—not fragments of a complex personality distributed over a series of different productions, but Balzac himself, full and complete, in each work as it comes. Doubtless there is some truth in the observation, but perhaps it is permissible to put the point in rather a different fashion. When Balzac was writing in *La Cousine Bette* of his sculptor, Wenceslas Steinbock, he makes some interesting comment on the artist's method of work which is, without any doubt whatever, applicable to himself. "If the artist does not fling himself, without reflecting, into his work, as Curtius flung himself into the yawning gulf, as the soldier flings himself into the enemy's trenches, and if, once in this crater, he does not work like a miner on whom the walls of his gallery have fallen in, he is simply looking on at the suicide of his own talent." This enormous absorption in the work on hand is very characteristic of Balzac, and explains at once his singularity and his success. But I should doubt if it was the method which most artists employ. There ought to come moments, one would think, when the creator stands apart from his creation and surveys it with a cool and critical eye. He is not mastered by his materials, but having disposed them as he thinks fit, can afterwards readjust

them in any manner that suits him. In other words, the effort of creation is succeeded by, perhaps presided over by, an acute critical sense. Otherwise we get, what we assuredly get in Balzac, a most curious, and sometimes helpless, entanglement of the man in his materials. In point of fact, he is like the miner working away inside his crater, working for dear life lest the walls should fall in and crush him.

What prevented any such fate was precisely that power of the imagination which is too often ignored in an estimate of the French author. He could carry his reader away with him, whatever the subject might be in which he was interested, just because he was so wholly absorbed in his work and had transfigured it by his imaginative ardor. It was just the same in his practical life. He was perpetually devising schemes for making money, and over and over again he seems to have persuaded his friends that there was something in his schemes. At one time he thought of building, on the fields surrounding his little country house of Les Jardies, huge forcing-houses, exposed to all the fierceness of the sun's rays. In these forcing-houses pineapples were to be grown—at least one hundred thousand at a time. Now, the ordinary price of a pineapple in Paris was twenty francs, and if the hundred thousand were sold at five francs each they would produce a yearly income of 400,000 or 500,000 francs, without any very appreciable expense. Balzac did not only persuade himself of the success of the scheme, but he so far prevailed with his friends that they actually looked out for a shop on the boulevards for the sale of the pineapples, and asked the author of the project what kind of signboard he would like over the door. There is another, and still more notorious instance. Balzac thought he had discovered the spot in the environs of Paris where Toussaint Louverture had buried his treasure. Two of his best friends—Sandeau and Gautier—appear to have been so convinced that there was something in the idea that in the early dawn they sallied forth from Paris armed with spades to commence the operations of digging. Needless to say, nothing was found.[1]

Balzac was always fertile in inventions—for the most compelling of all reasons because he was perpetually in debt. He tried, amongst other things, to conduct a printing establishment, but he left it owing at least 100,000 francs. Miss Sandars tells us that in 1828, 1829, and 1830 Balzac only made three thousand francs each year. Now, as he required some 6,000 francs for interest on past debt, and wanted 3,000 francs to live on, he must have increased his debt by about 24,000 francs in three years. Seven years later, in 1837, the amount of his indebtedness was something like 162,000 francs—over £6,000. Hence his enormous laboriousness was always being spurred by his actual necessities. For the most part he was high-spirited and optimistic, and some of his friends described him as childish in his capacity for enjoyment. But at other times the burdens he bore told somewhat heavily on his equanimity. In the *Lettres à l'Etrangère*, in August, 1835, he writes to Madame Hanska: "Work, always work! Heated nights succeed heated nights, days of meditation succeed days of meditation, from execution to conception, from conception to execution! Little money compared with what I want, much money compared with production. If each of my books were paid like those of Walter Scott, I should manage; but although well paid, I do not attain my

[1] So George Brandes says in his "Currents of Modern Literature," v. 90. But perhaps the treasure was in the West Indies.

goal. . . . I do not know whether a brain, pen, and hand will ever before have accomplished such a 'tour de force' with the help of a bottle of ink." In order to be able to work without interruption at all times and at all seasons, Balzac used to refresh himself, through long fatiguing nights of labor, with a tremendous quantity of coffee. As one of his friends has said: "He lived on 50,000 cups of coffee, and died of 50,000 cups of coffee."

As a matter of fact, the real literary life of Balzac only lasted for twenty-one years. In the year 1829, when he was 30, were published his first serious novel, *Les Chouans*, and a curiously distasteful satire—if, indeed, that be the right term to apply to it—*Physiologie du Mariage*. From that time onward his books were produced in a steady stream, and although he had many distractions and indulged himself in several foreign journeys, as well as peregrinations to different parts of France, he allowed nothing to interfere with that capacity for passionate labor which was one of his most distinguishing characteristics. As a man we know him fairly intimately by the *Lettres à l'Etrangère*. And yet certain things escape us. He was a singular combination of good temper and moroseness in alternating fits. He was certainly childish in many respects, preserving at all events a remarkably youthful heart through all the embittering troubles of his career. And yet, though he was childish enough in reference to himself, he was a profound observer of the people around him, analyzing the intricacies of character with a master hand. His business affairs, his romantic affections, his literary work, were the triple object to which all his time and industry were devoted, and, with the exception of the third, they did not stand him in good stead. His work was his salvation. But his spasmodic indulgence in commercial affairs, and the unrestrained energy with which he gave himself up to the various romantic episodes of his life seem to have represented his weakness rather than his strength. And yet Balzac without his weakness would be no longer the Balzac we know.

Perhaps because he was quite one of the most good-natured men of genius who ever existed, he was ready to accept the advances of anyone, whether male or female, who seemed to be inspired either by affection or admiration for him. He was genuinely fond of his sister Laure, and, though there was not much love lost between them, he had a genuine respect for his mother. But his romantic life was occupied with three women in especial, all above him in rank, towards each of whom he seems to have formed a passionate attachment. The first was much the best of the three—Madame de Berny, a lady a good deal older than himself, and mother of nine children. He was introduced to her as early as 1821, and she figures in his private correspondence as "Dilecta," and as Madame de Mortsauf in that novel which he sometimes was inclined to regard as his masterpiece, *Le Lys dans la Vallée*. This was an infatuation which lasted till about 1836. It was succeeded by the empire of a very different person—the Marquise de Castries—a fashionable, shallow-hearted lady, who took him up for a time and then dropped him with absolute unconcern, much to his mortification and regret. She probably figures as the model of most of those ladies of fashion who are born without a conscience, and commit their indiscretions with ruthlessness. The third of his Egerias was the most important of all. In 1832 he received a letter from "l'Etrangère"—in other words, the Countess Evelina Hanska—who remained his idol for the rest of

his life, and to whom he addressed most of the documents which appear in the *Lettres à l'Etrangère.*

Quite early in his career Balzac defined his two great ambitions. He desired to be both admired and to be loved. It says a great deal for his optimism, or perhaps his *naïveté*, that a man who ought to have amassed so much definite experience of life should for a moment imagine that two such ideals could be simultaneously realized. To become famous is, in the vast majority of cases, to scorn delights and live laborious days—a purely ascetic idea for the sake of which much that is valuable in life has necessarily to be sacrificed, especially perhaps those ordinary moments when the man of industry and genius forgets his mission and becomes an unaffected individual inspired by simple motives of like and dislike, hope and fear. But the other career which Balzac seems to have sketched out for himself, the career of a man who creates an atmosphere of devotion wherever he moves, who is popular with his contemporaries, and especially popular with the female sex—that is a totally different thing, necessitating a very different arrangement of time, involving, in point of fact, a good deal of waste of time, from the point of view at all events of a genius immersed in his books. Poor Balzac suffered from many cruel deceptions in this matter. After his unceremonious rejection by the Marquise de Castries, he was to undergo a not dissimilar experience with Madame Hanska. She was without any doubt whatsoever, his guiding star, because he felt himself under a sort of compulsion to communicate all his thoughts and all the incidents of his life to her sympathetic ear. But did she love him in return? It may have been so, although a good deal of vanity might have entered into the feeling. But the sequel seems to prove that hers was not the enduring love which Balzac's nature craved. There were many intervals when they never met, although there were brilliant moments when the old fires seemed to blaze anew. She had promised to marry him if ever she became a widow. Her husband's death occurred at the end of 1841, but the actual wedding did not take place till the 14th of March, 1850. Three months from that date Balzac himself was dead. We can hardly be wrong in thinking that Madame Hanska had no very profound nature, and was not capable of real devotion. Probably long before her marriage her feeling for the great novelist had entirely passed away. Nothing more pathetic can well be imagined than the death scene, which Victor Hugo witnessed. When he called at the house a maid-servant let him in. "Monsieur," she said, "is dying. The doctors gave him up yesterday. Madame has gone to her own rooms." When Hugo went up to Balzac's bedroom he found a nurse, a man-servant standing by the bed, and an old woman—the last of whom was Balzac's mother. But the wife, l'Etrangère, the object of so much passionate attachment, was not with him in his last moments.

Illusions Perdues, the title of one of Balzac's most famous works, seems to describe, not inaptly, the end of that strenuous career. Victor Hugo, however, makes some amends. At the Cemetery of Père-la-Chaise, where the interment took place (as Miss Sandars tells us), Hugo made an oration, of which the concluding sentences ran thus: "No, it is not the Unknown to him. I have said this before, and I shall never tire of repeating it. It is not darkness to him, it is Light! It is not the end, but the beginning; not nothingness, but eternity. . . . Do we not say to ourselves here, to-day, that it is impossible for a great genius in

this life to be other than a great spirit after death?"

The Fortnightly Review.

And a great spirit after his death Balzac has assuredly become.

W. L. Courtney.

PEN PICTURES OF TIPPERARY AND MAYO.

A Fine Winter's Day.

When the darkness of rain and mist that so often broods over Ireland in winter has lifted for a spell to allow of a white frost at night and a radiantly sunny day to follow, what bliss it is to be out and away upon the hills! There is a high ridge behind Clonmel, where Waterford fronts Tipperary to the north, on which you may walk for miles through bracken, furze and heather, smelling the salt breeze from the unseen Atlantic, with a view southwards of rolling hills, while to the wide north, spread like a map at your feet, is the teeming plain of Tipperary. In the pauses of a day of woodcock shooting, when the eye may wander from the intent business of watching for the helter-skelter rush of the brown, twig-beaked fellow, it is a restful change to let it roam across that plain. Below you the "gentle Suir," a light frosty blue, flows in a long, narrow streak to Carrick; by Clonmel in its dark hollow, under old-world bridges that stand out against its paleness; and where these bridges occur, or where once were fords, are ivy-covered towers—forlorn reminders of a bygone day. Slieve-na-Mon—the "Hill of the Maidens"—fills in the middle distance to your right, and of all hills that I have seen the wide world over it is the fairest.

There is this curious thing about the Irish "mountains," that in spite of their actual diminutiveness they are all not only beautiful, but imposing. Here is one that is only about 2,300 feet high, that is not even marked in many maps, yet that has still a dignity and grandeur that rank it in one's memory with mountains that are world-famous. It is beautiful in all its aspects, and the soft Irish clouds that drift between it and the sun throw shadows of haunting loveliness upon its flanks.

Having rested for a breathing-space on Slieve-na-Mon the eye can range over the broad-spreading acres of Tipperary, losing itself at last on the far, clear-cut horizon, where Cashel of the Kings rears it great rock, backed by the distant peaks of the Slieve Bloom.

On days when the birds lie out of the woods it is a case of "walking" them across the now dead heather. Then what miracles of light and shade can the sun not work with materials that are supposedly all brown? Brown of heather, brown of bog, brown of bracken, these, in the absence of other colors, seem to embrace all colors. Only the blue sky above and the fleecy clouds are outside the scheme, while still giving to it its setting. Sometimes the mists roll up from the valley and shut out the view, coming down so thickly all around us that it is impossible to see more than twenty yards ahead. Suddenly there will come a rent through which a cross-beam of sunshine strikes a startlingly near hill or far portion of the plain, causing them to stand out clear and colored amid the surrounding darkness.

A Memory of Summer.

Very different is this scene in summer, when, instead of climbing to these Waterford heights to gain the warmth of exhilaration we do so to escape the humidity and closeness of the valley. The panorama of the plain may be the

same, but it is painted more softly, and withal more generously, by the season. The river shows only here and there between its stretches of heavy timber, and upon the mountains and the far vistas of the plain the indescribable Irish softness has descended. This softness it is that distinguishes Ireland's scenery from that of all other countries. The Trossachs and the Scottish highlands are splendidly beautiful, the Lake District of England is charmingly pretty, no one who has been in India can forget the clear loveliness of such hills as the Aravallis in that precious time that centres in the sunset—but in Ireland we look through a magic crystal at hills to which is lent a poignant ecstasy.

I remember often, as a schoolboy, shivering in a cold schoolroom in the dark days of January, trying to recall and realize the summer that had fled; and often it seemed impossible that such beauty could have been. And on the winter days that in these parts, alas, succeed to one another with sad monotony (save for those red-letter ones I have spoken of) it seems impossible that the summer days can have been, or that they will recur.

Yet they have been, and they form a very fragrant memory, do those summer evenings when, the day's work over, one would climb the winding track that led away into the Coomeraghs, turning every now and then to watch the expanding view beneath. Arrived at length on the summit of the ridge, what a joy it was to throw oneself down amid the sweet mountain grass and *think!* The Irish peasant mind is very tenacious of tradition, and with the loathing that remains for Cromwell of the Curse and Orange William there remains too a sense of credit taken for the very covetousness of the conquerors. Thus it is remembered that Cromwell took Tipperary for his own especial booty, and that William, on his way to besiege Limerick, the "City of the Violated Treaty," when he arrived with his staff on the crest of such a view-commanding ridge as this, exclaimed, "This is a land worth fighting for!"

All about us the westering sun floods the hill slopes with its light. To the north is the far-flung plain. Pellucid Slieve-na-Mon closes the view to the east, and the Galtees and Knockmealdowns to the west, brooding in violet haze. Work is going on while daylight lasts in the little hedged-in fields around us, the same old dignifying labor of the earth of which the eye cannot tire nor the heart be ashamed. It has been good to see, whether it has had to do with diminutive Indian bullocks, scraping up their tiny portions of the vast plain of Hindustan, or the stately white oxen of Tuscany, or the sleek horses of the English shires, or, as here, donkey and horse, or horse and jennet, yoked in quaint fellowship together. And whatever of regret we may have—you as the modern dispossessed, or we whom you dispossessed—for the disappearance of a landed gentry, thus much must be said: that than a race of peasant proprietors, conscious of their dignity, there is no finer thing on earth.

There exist drawbacks, alas, to real peasant proprietorship, and one of them is the tree destruction that goes on unchecked in Ireland. Here where I sat so often last summer the fresh Atlantic breezes used to whisper in the trees enclosing a little, isolated cottage; and dotted about the hillside were more clumps of trees, half hiding other homesteads. Yet there were spots in which nothing remained of shady groves but the hacked tree-stumps, showing bare and desolate in the green banks out of which they sprang. Here it was that the purple foxgloves congregated most, as though

nature were striving to conceal her spoiling. It was a wonderful foxglove year in these parts, and of all the wildflowers the foxglove is to me the most appealing. It is the calendar of the summer months, marking the days by the gradual shedding of its blossoms, dying upwards, bloom by bloom, till at the end of summer its long stalks wave forlornly in the breeze, with but a single flower atop.

The corncrake sounds his harsh-sweet note in the grass that awaits the reaper. As we listen we can hear the bell-like noise of the machines on the far side of the hill, scarce to be distinguished from the tinkle of the evening Angelus that comes floating up to us from Clonmel of the Sleepy Hollow.

I know of miniature ravines that lead downwards from these lovely heights, with gurgling water at their foot, cornflowers of wondrous blue and purple, and that most joyous wild forget-me-not that seems too pretty even for this earth.

The Mayo Coast.

Away in the west Croagh Patrick, with its little wind-swept chapel, looks down upon a land of lake and bog, of crag and shingle, with the long line of the Atlantic surf bent by bold headlands and deeply-recessed inlets, and the blue expanse of ocean dotted by opal islands. The chapel is a rough oratory of stone, built by voluntary effort from material carried from the plain beneath. Once a year a great concourse of people assemble at the foot of the mountain and go in pilgrimage up the steep track to assist at the votive Mass.

I have not seen that Mayo land in winter; but tempestuous days in summer provide a foretaste of it. August and September are its months of glory, and an acquaintance begun then is sure to be renewed.

Here the prevailing tint, too, is brown; a brown that on fine days turns to bronze and gold. There are days when the atmosphere is almost still, but ever there is a sense of freshness and exhilaration. Changing tones pass over the surface of the sea and across the mountains, and all the wide Universe seems to ring with joy.

At other times, with the sun still shining out of a clear sky, a wind against which you can scarcely stand blows straight in from Labrador. The long rollers, with crash upon crash, come hurtling themselves upon the rocky foreshore, and the wind flings their foam high in the sparkling air. Watching from a certain position on Curraun Peninsula, where the configuration of Clew Bay sets wind and tide in opposition, I have seen the spray flung backwards from the shore, like a tossing mane, and all the colors of the rainbow shining amid its whiteness.

The sight of the eternal hills, from beach or roadway, makes you feel compelled to climb them. During their long ascent your devious way leads you past pools of living blue, through stretches of morass, by patches of potato fields where the comely Mayo women, in red petticoat and violet bodice, work until dusk. Gaunt-looking dogs of uncertain breed and temper guard the feeding cattle, and, when evening falls, with much barking and to-do they drive them home.

Achill Island.

The amethyst is found in Achill, and I never see one but I think of that wild, beautiful island. Precious stones and gems possess this power of suggesting and recalling, and if the emerald stands for the rest of Ireland, so does the amethyst remind us of the western islets. Achill must be dreary enough in winter, but seen as we saw it, on those sunny days of August, it

possesses a rare beauty. The interior of the island is an alternation of rolling valleys and high, rocky hills, and along the coast there is in most places a sheer drop of a hundred feet to the sea. On a still summer's day you look down into the depths and note with delight the play of colors, the reflections of the tiny clouds, the paths and tracks across the surface, made by the unseen set of currents—the whole joyous pageant of the sea's "multitudinous smile." There is a circular road around the island, and the journey can easily be done by motor, though there are some stiff gradients and sharp turns. Here and there you come upon clusters of cottages, sheltering from the winds that in winter sweep the island from end to end. Tiny patches of potatoes, dug with who knows what toil from the unpromising soil, adjoin each cottage, and you see the prows or sterns of old, black-tarred boats, upturned to form a kennel for a dog or refuges for chickens. A gaunt little tower stands close to the water's edge, over against the mainland, which was once an outpost of Gran-u-aile, and fishing boats beating up the narrow channel as I saw them on one windy day might have been bringing that warrior princess's soldiery to the island, as their exact counterparts must long ago have done.

As we sweep round a promontory we come upon a little chapel, and a neglected graveyard which contains a memorial to a party of islanders "accidentally drowned" in some great storm. The ocean takes heavy toll from the fishermen of Mayo.

A Mayo Interior.

As one steps across the threshold the poverty of it all strikes one. When one has crossed it, and entered the single room, poverty is the right, the God-willed thing. It is we who are strange and out of place, our lives vain, our pursuits idle.

We were caught in the heavy Irish rain, on the outskirts of the village, and the wind could hardly be battled with. Our hotel was distant, and the leeward side of a little thatched cottage gave promise of shelter. As we picked our way along the surface drain that formed the approach, the dripping door was opened by a young girl, and we were prayed to step inside. She held the door quite wide, and the wind scrupled not to take possession, driving out the carefully-hoarded warmth of a turf fire, and causing the cow and ass that stood with bowed heads in the gloaming of the far end of the room to stir uneasily. A row of chickens, perched on the lowest rail of some nondescript article of furniture, gave a chirping protest. A big collie-like dog came forward with a sort of disarmed awkwardness, and a little kitten continued gazing pensively into the fire.

It is just a single room, with a dingily curtained-off recess, where stands a bed, and in another corner a rickety ladder gives access to a loft, where the men of the family sleep. The floor is of mud, the walls were once whitewashed, and the red glow from the fire plays upon the ribs of a smoke-blackened roof. The chimney is wide, with a huge iron pot suspended from a tripod, and gathered round the fire is the family—or what America and poverty have left of several families.

There are five persons—an old woman, a young man and woman of eighteen or nineteen, and two tiny, fair-haired children. Everything else fades before the charm and dignified simplicity of the old woman. In her young days she must have been very pretty, before family cares and the hard toil of the fields had conspired with time to change her; and her features are regular, and the expression of her eyes most beautiful. She wears the brilliant red petticoat and

violet bodice of the peasant, her feet are bare, and her jet black hair is neatly parted. Her voice has that wonderful way of lapsing into a croon —the borderland between speech and chanting. She speaks slowly, as though choosing the English words for her glowing Irish thoughts, and finding the medium cold and difficult.

It would be impossible to reproduce her speech, but her allusions are in the beautiful manner of Synge—not so formed, indeed, for she has not sufficient English, but full of charm when pondered on. Hearing her, one recalls his phrases, "lonely as the moon at dawn," "a drift of ewes," "his soul going up naked to the saints of God," "a distant corner of high, windy hills."

She spoke to us about the fine summer, and thanked God for it; about the winter that was their dread, and its long, dark months; about the young, bright children that had gone across the ocean to America; how well some did, and how many others passed into oblivion. And she told us about the two little ones that were nestling up against her, the fire-glow rendering weirdly beautiful the wonderment of their eyes.

We had taken them for her grandchildren, but as our talk proceeded we discovered that they were merely adopted, out of that charity that only the poor can afford to practise. They were not bound to her by any other tie. A neighbor had departed for America some years before with two elder children, and left these two mites to follow when there would be money to send them for their passage. No love for her little charges would have persuaded this foster-mother to keep them, had their parents sent for them, we well knew; nor would a word of complaint at the expense to which she had been put ever cross her lips. But the remittance had never come. Only one more group of Irish had gone under in "God's own country."

And so, in grinding poverty at home, with a family of her own hard put to it to earn a living, this Irish mother kept and clothed these little ones, looking for no reward.

"Ah," she said, "sure they're not fit to voyage into the far places yet, and they with nobody to pick them and clean them by the way. I just keeps them here in the heat of the turf till they be fitter like to mind themselves. There's them that goes to Ameriky and gets to be merchants and rich magnates. But I'm thinking most of them do find it hard to care for anybody but themselves.

Richard Fitzwalter.

The British Review.

MISS AMELIA.

I.

For the Londoner, a walk across his own city from any one point to any other is a cheap and easy method of adventure. Late in the afternoon of a Saturday in October which I had spent in the vain endeavor to obtain a sight of some rare birds reported as visitors to Hampstead Heath, I decided to return in a straight line from that too-populous Paradise to the Temple. Gospel Oak and Kentish Town were merely romantic names to me, and of Camden Town itself, famous in art and song, I possessed only a dim and gloomy idea which I owed to the works of Mr. Walter Sickert.

I had not gone far before I began to share all the sensations of the unfortunate poet who looked on smoky dwarf houses and felt his soul oppressed by a vague dejection. Gospel

Oak, instead of being a vast and heaven-pointing tree, was a labyrinth of ugly streets in which I lost myself until I came to the tram-lines, and there were no orchards in Kentish Town. Instead, there were grimy tenements with a great quantity of dishonorable underclothing hanging from their balconies; a rabble of infants, mostly anæmic, and all dirty, and a large percentage of persons with "faces whose like one is not glad to find." More depressing, even, than the squat houses and the gaunt tenements were the rows of frowsy villas, with untidy creepers hanging in dank festoons from their peeling stucco, and sombre little gardens in which grimy laurels and mouldering statues drooped in mournful decadence—pathetic remnants of a decayed gentility, they seemed to have given up in despair the struggle to be respectable, and to be wearily waiting for the advent of the housebreaker who would eliminate them from a scene where their presence was no longer decent. Many of them were to let, and I was able to observe, on the boards which announced this fact, various examples of the unfailing optimism of the house-agent. This one was commodious, that one desirable; another, distinguished from its fellows by a tottering trellised balcony on the ground floor, was elegant; yet another, a sinister abode fit only for owls and troglodytes, was actually delightful. None of the villas which were inhabited betrayed any symptom of a sense of life's amenities on the part of its occupants, —unless the presence of abandoned straw hats, outworn boots, and empty sardine tins could be regarded as evidence of a certain luxury. Occasionally the inhabitants of these drab houses regarded me from their windows, and though I felt sorry for them, their aspect was sinister and I loved them not. They seemed all to be women; I saw no vestige of the other sex.

I pursued my way, wondering vaguely why England should have been especially cursed, both materially and spiritually, by this plague of the genteel gone to rot and ruin, and attributing the curse, as I like to attribute most things evil in our social system, to the deadly early-Victorian passion for class distinction and worship of a respectability that was for the most part sham, showiness, and score-off-my-neighbor-ness. In the midst of these highly original reflections, and whilst I was passing yet another row of villa residences, I was confronted with a singular spectacle.

The street was deserted, except for a group of errand-boys and children who were congregated round a figure that seemed to be clinging to the rusty railings in front of one of the houses. As I approached, the figure resolved itself into an old woman who was dressed in black, and wore a small bonnet which would have been fashionable, I suppose, in the epoch of the crinoline. She had dropped her umbrella, and was clutching the railings with both hands; apparently she was trying to drag herself along, but her feet refused to move. The cluster of children watched her with apathetic interest; the errand-boys were grinning and making remarks in their own horrible dialect.

I pushed my way through the little crowd, and saw that though she was bent, she was a very tall woman, and, to judge by the lines on her face, extremely old. Her eyes were closed, and she was terribly pale. When I asked her if she was ill she did not seem to hear me. One of the errand-boys, however, responded for her.

"Garn, gavner!" he said cheerfully, "she ynt ill. She's bawmy, that's wot she is. Orterbe run in by the pleece."

I ignored this youthful moralist, and spoke again to the old woman. She suddenly opened her eyes, which were

astonishingly brilliant, and looked at me.

"I'm afraid I fainted," she said, in a very low voice but quite coherently. "It's nothing—results of influenza. If you would be so kind as to give me your arm—I live at number eighty-two —this road. Very sorry to be a nuisance."

Even the effort of uttering these few words was too much for her. She closed her eyes again, released her grasp of the railings, and would have fallen if I had not caught her. I put my arm round her waist—an action which gave huge delight to the errand-boys—and then questioned the children as to the whereabouts of number eighty-two. They stared at me in solemn silence, but at length a little girl, who wore painfully obvious pink flannel underclothing, withdrew her thumb from her mouth and held it, pointing backwards, over her shoulder. I scowled like a thunder-cloud at the errand-boys, and began to propel the old woman forward in the direction indicated. She could only just manage to walk, and our progress was very slow and had possibly a comical aspect; the errand-boys, at any rate, agreed to appreciate the humor of the situation.

The old lady seemed to become feebler with each step that we took; I began to despair of reaching number eighty-two, and had almost decided to take her into the next house that we reached, when a welcome ally appeared on the scene. A quiet-eyed, decently-dressed woman of about fifty suddenly confronted us, and without wasting time in speech, placed the old lady's right arm round her neck and supported her with a method far more practical than my own. This reinforcement entirely altered the position of affairs; we proceeded steadily down the street, and in a few minutes had reached the gate of number eighty-two. I helped to carry the old lady up the steps, and when she was safely at the front door I asked the woman if there was any one in the house who would look after her.

"She is my mistress, sir," said the woman, producing a latchkey. "She often has these fainting fits. She oughtn't to go anywhere by herself, but sometimes when I'm upstairs she slips out. If you'll just help me with her into her room, she'll be all right in a minute."

We passed into a dingy little hall: the floor was covered with frayed linoleum, and the paper on the walls was dark with age, but it was spotlessly clean, and there were some good artists' proofs of various Academical pictures. Whilst the maid was shutting the door and I was supporting the old lady, I noticed a number of tweed caps and hats, several fishing-rods and a cricket-bat, on a rack fixed to the wall; evidently there were young people in the house, and it was not, as I had imagined for no particular reason, the abode of a desolate spinster. The maid opened a door on the right of the hall.

"This is her room, sir," she said. "We'll bring her right in and put her on the sofa."

As we lifted the old lady on to that piece of furniture I noticed how terribly emaciated she was; I seemed to be holding a skeleton in female apparel. The maid went to a cupboard, returning in a moment with some brandy in a wineglass, which she poured into the old lady's mouth. Its effect was immediate; the old lady made a very wry face and opened her eyes. She stared for a few seconds at the ceiling, then she suddenly sat bolt upright. Her eyes were extraordinarily vivid, and her lips took a comical twist.

"Jane," she cried, "what were you doing out of doors at this time of day?"

The woman watched her intently. "What were you doing there, Miss

Amelia?" she said, speaking, however, very quietly and respectfully. The old lady looked guilty.

"I only went to meet Master Dick on his way from the station," she explained. "And then I had another of those tiresome fainting fits. I'm growing like those silly girls in that book you read to me—Miss Ferrier's, wasn't it?" Her eyes wandered to me. "Mercy! I forgot!" she cried, almost briskly; "that young gentleman gave me his arm and I never thanked him! I'm very much obliged to you, Mr. Stranger, I'm sure. If my nephew had found me fainting in the road I don't know what he would have said. He's always telling me not to go about by myself. He'll be here in a moment; you'll stay to see him—he'll want to thank you, and you'll have some tea. Jane, tea! and the Spode cups."

I looked at Jane; Jane looked at me, and made an almost imperceptible movement of warning. I liked Jane's aspect: she had an old-fashioned air of dogged faithfulness that was not too common amongst her tribe, and I took the hint at once. I thanked the old lady, and said I was certain that she ought to rest after her adventure. I added that I would call to inquire how she was on the following day. She smiled and nodded. "I shall be delighted,—that's charming of you," she said. "But I believe you're running away now because you're afraid of Jane. Jane's a dragon—aren't you, Jane?"

Jane smiled discreetly. "You know you *ought* to rest, Miss Amelia!" she said. Miss Amelia heaved a comic sigh.

"Well, well!" she murmured, leaning back on her cushions. Then she turned again towards me. "Do come to-morrow, if you care to, but I can't promise——" she broke off abruptly. "You don't live in this awful place?" she cried after a moment.

I explained that I lived in the Temple. "The Temple!" she said. "I knew it forty, no fifty years ago, when my brother was a young barrister,—hardly a barrister; not full fledged. He became a big-wig afterwards; I expect you have heard of him, though he's been dead these many years. Dick's father was his son. Lord Arlesfont was his name—he was only a law lord, of course, and invented it himself. How we used to laugh at him about it!"

I had heard much of the late Lord Arlesfont, and, in particular, that he had died worth several hundred thousand pounds. It occurred to me as odd that his sister should be living in an undesirable villa residence near Kentish Town. I glanced round the room: the furniture was old and for the most part ugly, but there were some good pieces of oak, many books, and a number of framed photographs which were mainly portraits of army officers in uniform and young women in bridal or presentation dresses. All these things were superfluous evidence of a fact which I had already realized,—that the old woman had nothing whatever in common with those of her neighbors whom I had seen as I wandered through the drab streets. Though she was wizened and bony, she had a tremendous distinction, she was—as one felt that the male originals of the photographs would have forcibly asserted—every inch a lady, with a breezy and vigorous personality which age and illness had been unable to tame. There was breeding in every line of her: in her broad brow, her queer long nose, her mouth with its deeply furrowed corners and the way in which she wore her shabby old black silk dress.

"You're looking at my photographs," she said. "Plenty of soldiers, aren't there? We're a fighting family; one of us has been in every big battle since Ramillies to a certainty, and probably since Crecy or Agincourt. I'm proud

of it; I'd have been a soldier myself if I'd been a man. Dick laughs at me when I boast about them all, but there's no doubt it's in our blood. Jane will tell you that I'm quite silly about them; when I was stronger I used to walk to Whitehall just to look at those fine big fellows standing sentry on their black horses; but I can't manage the journey now, and there are no soldiers here—only the Salvation Army, poor things!"

"Do you like living here?" I asked. The old lady laughed, but not bitterly.

"I abominate the place," she said emphatically; "but there are several good reasons why I live here. One of them is that Dick would be miserable in the country, and likes an out-of-the-way part of London where he won't meet——" She checked herself suddenly; the aspect of her face changed. "I'm a garrulous old woman; I'm not going to weary you with my affairs," she concluded after a moment, and set her lips resolutely.

I went over to her and pressed her bony fingers. "Then I may call to-morrow?" I asked.

She nodded briskly. "That's very gallant of you," she said. "I wouldn't let you come all this way just to see a worn-out old woman, but I really believe that when I tell Dick all about you he'll want to thank you and talk to you. I can't promise, of course; he's very shy, poor boy." She thanked me herself once again, in graceful phrases, for helping her in the street, and waved a hand to me as I went out of the room. "I shall call you my *preux chevalier!*" she cried.

The faithful Jane came to open the front door for me. She, too, thanked me quietly and without any effusiveness. I took my hat from the rack, and as I did so I saw the fishing-rods and the cricket-bat.

"I see that Mr. Dick is fond of sport," I said.

"Yes, sir," answered Jane. There was a queer note in her voice that made me look swiftly at her, and then I realized that she was regarding me with the keenest scrutiny that my very mild personality had ever undergone. Next moment she turned and opened the door. I wished her good evening, and walked down the steps, wondering if she regarded me as a possible burglar. Yet there was no suspicion, I thought, in her eyes; nothing but an intense desire to read my secret soul. I concluded, as I walked away down avenues of gas lamps, that Jane was merely a keen student of human character; but it was a long time before I forgot her expression.

II.

There was no trace of it, however, in her broad, honest face when I went to call on the Sunday afternoon. She seemed really pleased to see me. But when I made inquiries about Miss Amelia's health her smile faded, and she admitted that she was anxious. The old lady had fainted again several times, and her usually strong recuperative energy seemed to have deserted her. I expressed a fear that my visit would tire Miss Amelia, but Jane alleged that it would have a beneficent effect if I did not stay too long.

"You mustn't mind if some of the things she says seem a bit queer, sir," she added. I thought privately that Jane tended to underrate the mental faculties of her mistress. There had been nothing "queer" about Miss Amelia on the previous day; for an old woman who had just recovered from an attack of faintness her mental clarity had been distinctly remarkable. I said something of the kind to Jane, who made no reply, but opened the door of Miss Amelia's room and announced me.

Miss Amelia was lying on the sofa, she looked amazingly gaunt and white,

and her eyes shone with unnatural brilliance. As soon as she saw me she smiled and held out her hand.

"This is very kind of you, Mr. *preux chevalier*," she said. "I revise my theories on the manners of modern young men. But, oh dear!" she continued with a comical grimace, "some young men certainly aren't like you, and, after all, I've lured you here for nothing."

"What do you mean by for nothing?" I demanded when I had shaken her hand and found a chair. She laughed rather ruefully.

"I mean that what I was afraid of has happened," she explained. "That naughty boy Dick is too shy to meet you and has gone off for a long walk all by himself. It's really too bad of him, and I shall give him a good scolding when he comes back. As I said to him, it isn't as if you were one of his relations."

I expressed a polite regret that I had frightened the elusive nephew away. "Doesn't Mr. Dick like his relations?" I asked.

The old lady pursed up her lips and looked mysterious.

"He has very good reasons for not liking them," she said. "But I know that he would like you, and he ought to have a man friend. It's very lonely for him here."

"What does he do?" I asked. "I mean, has he a profession?" Miss Amelia shook her head.

"He's not doing anything just at present," she answered. "Of course, he'll find something soon. Then he'll be happier. Poor Dick! he used to be such a happy boy, always laughing and making absurd jokes. And he was just the same, I believe, in his regiment."

"He was in the Army?" I inquired.

"Yes, in the Thirty-fourth," she replied. "But he left it last year,—wasn't it last year? Time runs on, time runs on so fast." She became silent abruptly and the light in her eyes faded.

"What a pity!" I said after a while. She turned her head swiftly. "Eh?" she cried.

"A pity that he left the Service," I explained. "He is very young, isn't he? And from what you said about him I imagine that he liked soldiering."

She nodded slowly.

"He's only twenty-four," she answered. "Oh! he loved the life! And he was getting on so well; he was so smart and popular. The Colonel admitted that." Her eyes brightened; she looked at me with something of the kind of scrutiny to which Jane had subjected me on the previous afternoon. "I feel certain you're a sympathetic person!" she said, smiling very queerly. Then her expression changed; she frowned, and looked as if she were troubled by some baffling train of thought. "If I told him that you knew everything and sympathized," she said after a pause, "he would like you."

I made the not very subtle deduction that the military career of the elusive Dick had ended painfully or scandalously. "Wouldn't it be better to wait before you tell me anything intimate about him?" I suggested. "I'm only a stranger, after all, and he might resent it now."

She thought over this suggestion. "Perhaps," she said, "but I should like you to hear the truth. You will know his name, and I expect people are still telling lies about him everywhere. It happened so short a time ago. His name, you know, is Welburn—ex-Lieutenant Richard Welburn."

She leant forward and stared at me. I ransacked my memory in vain for any history connected with the name. When I informed Miss Amelia of this she looked slightly incredulous.

"Dear me, very odd!" she said. "But

perhaps you don't read the newspapers. Well! If you really haven't heard the lies, perhaps there's no particular point in telling you the truth at present. Later, when you have met him and see what a fine manly fellow they have ruined—but here comes Jane with the tea. Jane, Mr. *preux chevalier* says that it's no use your protesting; you really are the most perfectly finished specimen of a dragon. As for you," she went on, turning to me, "you're to give your whole attention to admiring the Spode tea-service. It's only produced on solemn occasions. Have you brought an extra cup in case Mr. Dick comes back, Jane?"

"Yes, Miss Amelia," said Jane.

The bony old hand which poured out my tea was very tremulous that afternoon, and the wonderful Spode, which I duly admired, had several narrow escapes. But though Miss Amelia was so weak physically, and certainly ought to have been in bed, her spirit was undaunted, and she proved herself a most charming conversationalist. She catechised me concerning my tastes, my aims and ambitions, and afterwards she told me a great deal of her history. In her youth she had travelled widely, and I found that her passion for Italy was at least as warm as my own; she spoke of old pictures and old books with knowledge and enthusiasm; she had a real sense of humor and was refreshingly free from prejudice. I found myself thinking very soon that the blighted Mr. Dick, if he had any appreciation of personality, was not greatly to be pitied; if he had experienced ill fortune in the Army he had certainly been lucky beyond the wont of man in the companionship of his aunt. In earlier days she had known a great number of interesting people, and she had remembered countless anecdotes, not one of them dull; her reminiscences, however, did not include the last quarter of a century, a period which, I decided, she had spent in retirement that was enforced by unexpected poverty. Oddly enough, she seemed to have no sense of the length of this later stage in her life, and spoke of the time when she had suffered a serious financial reverse as if it were merely a few months before.

Mr. Dick did not appear, and I am afraid that I was scarcely troubled by his absence. At the end of the hour allotted to me by Jane I felt that I had really found a delightful friend, and I was well on the road to believing that if he had joined us I should have been capable of experiencing a genuine sensation of jealousy. There was no doubt of Miss Amelia's devotion to her nephew; whenever a footstep sounded in the street outside she would listen for a moment and then shake her head, "Not *his* step. Not springy enough!" she would murmur with a regretful smile. She reverted to him again shortly before I went away, told me various amusing anecdotes of his boyhood—he seemed to have been a really jolly scapegrace—and produced photographs of him in frocks, in Etons, and in uniform. The last showed him to be a good-looking, frank-eyed young fellow, with a weak mouth; the uniform seemed oddly old-fashioned, I thought; but my ignorance of things military is gigantic, and I made no comment to that effect.

The sight of the photograph of Dick in his tunic evidently produced a great emotional effect in her; she murmured some incoherent words and there were tears in her eyes. Next moment, however, she was looking at me almost defiantly.

"I'm a foolish old woman!" she cried. "He isn't done yet. He's only beginning his life, his real life. Very soon all that went before—all the misery—will be like a forgotten dream." Her voice became splendid; it rang

a challenge to the whole world. "Look at his face," she concluded, thrusting the photograph into my hands; "look at him, and tell me if *you* think he's done!"

She was like an inspired and bony prophetess, and her enthusiasm was really infectious. "Of course he's not done!" I said. "His real life is all before him, as you say. I only wish that I could be of some use to him," I added, rather feebly. "If *you* think he has been badly treated, I'm prepared to assert it everywhere."

She smiled and put her hand on my arm.

"You *can* be of use to him," she said. "Be his friend."

"If he'll allow it," I said. "I feel as if I were his friend already. You'll let me come again."

"Oh, of course *we* are friends!" cried Miss Amelia. I thought that it was a very graceful answer to my demand. A few minutes later the watchful Jane entered the room and drove me forth.

St. John Lucas.

Blackwood's Magazine. (*To be continued.*)

BOOKS WITHIN BOOKS.

Ignored in the catalogue of any library, not one of them lurking in any uttermost cavern under the reading-room of the British Museum, none of them ever printed even for private circulation, these books written by this and that character in fiction are books only by courtesy and good will.

But how few, after all, the books that *are* books! Charles Lamb let his kind heart master him when he made that too brief list of books that *aren't*. If he were alive now, he certainly would draw the line closer than he did. Published volumes were few in his day (though not, of course, few enough). Even he, in all the plenitude of his indulgence, would now have to demur that at least 90 per cent of the volumes that the publishers thrust on us, so hectically, every spring and autumn, are ἀβιβλία. What would he have to say of the novels, for example? These commodities are all very well in their way, no doubt. But let us have no illusions as to what their way is. The poulterer who sells strings of sausages does not pretend that every individual sausage is in itself remarkable. He does not assure us that "this is a sausage that gives furiously to think," or "this is a singularly beautiful and human sausage," or "this is undoubtedly the sausage of the year." Why are such distinctions drawn by the publisher? When he publishes, as he sometimes does, a novel that is a book (or at any rate would be a book if it were decently printed and bound) then by all means let him proclaim its difference—even at the risk of scaring away the majority of readers.

I admit that I myself might be found in that majority. I am shy of masterpieces; nor is this merely because of the many times I have been disappointed at not finding anything at all like what the publishers expected me to find. As a matter of fact, those disappointments are dim in my memory; it is long since I ceased to take publishers' opinions as my guide. I trust now, for what I ought to read, to the advice of a few highly literary friends. But so soon as I am told that I "must" read this or that, and have replied that I instantly will, I am seized with an uncontrollable desire to read something else. Years later, perhaps, I come across the volume that was recommended, and, galled now by no sense

of compulsion, try it and delight in it and begin to talk about it to my highly literary friends, who then raise their eyebrows, having long ago ceased to admire that work. I daresay that a few years hence I shall have read and revelled in "Jean-Christophe." So far I have merely pretended to have done so. Base deception? Well, I ceased to make it some months ago; it is some months since I heard the book mentioned. At a time when everybody has just been reading and revelling in a fine work, it is hard to sit dumb among dithyrambs; it is hard to be made to stand aside, an outcast. If you happen to be a statesman (say), or a sportsman or man of science, you may keep silence, even proclaim ignorance, and not be cast out. But if you are by way of being literary and nothing at all else, then, very rightly, you are expected to know the latest and best literary things, and to admire them—or at any rate to be able to offer some intelligent depreciation of them. And what I like about books within books is that nowhere do I have to make the pretence of having read a single one of them. It is extraordinarily comfortable that they don't exist.

And yet—for, even as Must implants distaste, so does Can't stir sweet longings—how eagerly would I devour these books within books! What fun, what a queer emotion, to fish out from a fourpenny-box, in a windy by-street, *Walter Lorraine*, by *Arthur Pendennis*, or *Passion Flowers*, by *Rosa Bunion!* I suppose poor Rosa's muse, so fair and so fervid in Rosa's day, would seem a trifle fatigued now; but what allowances one would make! Lord Steyne said of Walter Lorraine that it was "very clever and wicked." I fancy we should apply neither epithet now. Indeed, I have always suspected that Pen's maiden effort may have been on a plane with "The Great Hoggarty Diamond." Yet would I not skip a line of it. *Who Put Back the Clock?* is another work which I especially covet. Poor Gideon Forsyth! He was abominably treated, as Stevenson relates, in the matter of that grand but grisly piano; and I have always hoped that perhaps, in the end, as a sort of recompense, Fate ordained that the novel he had anonymously written should be rescued from the oblivion that overtook it so soon after it appeared on the railway bookstalls.

He had never acknowledged it, or only to some intimate friends while it was still in proof; after its appearance and alarming failure, the modesty of the author had become more pressing, and the secret was now likely to be better kept than that of the authorship of "Waverley."

Such an humiliation as Gideon's is rare in English fiction. In nine cases out of ten, a book within a book is an immediate, and immense success. On the whole, our novelists have always tended to optimism—especially they who have written mainly to please their public. It pleases the public to read about any sort of success. The greater, the more sudden and violent the success, the more valuable is it as ingredient in a novel. And, since the average novelist lives always in a dream that one of his works will somehow "catch on" as no other work ever has caught on yet, it is very natural that he should fondly try meanwhile to get this dream realized for him, vicariously, by this or that creature of his fancy. True, he is usually too self-conscious to let this creature achieve his sudden fame and endless fortune through a novel. Usually it is a play that does the trick. In the Victorian time it was almost always a book of poems. Oh for the spacious days of Tennyson and Swinburne! In how many a three-volume novel is mentioned some "slim octavo" which seems, from the account given,

to have been as arresting as "Poems and Ballads" without being less acceptable than "Idylls of the King"! These verses were always the anonymous work of some very young, very poor man, who supposed they had fallen still-born from the press until, one day, a week or so after publication, as he walked "moodily" and "in a brown study" along the Strand, a friend accosted him:—"Seen 'The Thunderer' this morning? By George, there's a column review of a new books of poems," &c. In some three-volume novel that I once read at a seaside place, having borrowed it from the little circulating library, there was a young poet whose sudden leap into the front rank has always laid a special hold on my imagination. The name of the novel itself I cannot recall; but I remember the name of the young poet —Aylmer Deane; and the for ever unforgettable title of his book of verse was *Poments: Being Poems of the Mood and the Moment.* What would I not give to possess a copy of that work?

II.

Though he had suffered, and though suffering is a sovereign preparation for great work, I did not at the outset foresee that Aylmer Deane was destined to wear the laurel. In real life I have rather a *flair* for future eminence. In novels I am apt to be wise only after the event. There the young men who do in due course take the town by storm have seldom shown (to my dull eyes) promise. Their spoken thoughts have seemed to me no more profound or pungent than my own. All that is best in them goes into their work. But, though I complain of them on this count, I admit that the thrill for me of their triumphs is the more rapturous because every time it catches me unawares. . One of the greatest emotions I ever had was from the triumph of *The Gift of Gifts.* Of this novel within a novel the author was not a young man at all, but an elderly clergyman whose life had been spent in a little rural parish. He was a dear, simple old man, a widower. He had a large family, a small stipend. Judge, then, of his horror when he found that his eldest son, "a scholar at Christminster College, Oxbridge," had run into debt for many hundreds of pounds. Where to turn? The father was too proud to borrow of the neighborly nobleman who in Oxbridge days had been his "chum." Nor had the father ever practised the art of writing. (We are told that "his sermons were always *extempore.*") But years ago "he had once thought of writing a novel based on an experience which happened to a friend of his." This novel, in the fullness of time, he now proceeded to write, though "without much hope of success." He knew that he was suffering from heart-disease. But he worked "feverishly, night after night," we are told, "in his old faded dressing-gown, till the dawn mingled with the light of his candle and warned him to snatch a few hours' rest, failing which he would be little able to perform the round of parish duties that awaited him in the daytime." No wonder he had not "much hope." No wonder I had no spark of hope for him. But what are obstacles for but to be overleapt? What avails heart-disease, what avail old and feverish haste and total lack of literary training, as against the romantic instinct of the lady who created the Rev. Charles Hailing? *The Gift of Gifts* "was acclaimed as a masterpiece by all the first-class critics." Also, it very soon "brought in" ten times as much money as was needed to pay off the debts of its author's eldest son. Nor, though Charles Hailing died some months later, are we told that he died from the strain of composition. We are left merely to rejoice at knowing he knew at the last

"that his whole family was provided for."

I wonder why it is that, whilst these Charles Hailings and Aylmer Deanes delightfully abound in the lower reaches of English fiction, we have so seldom found in the work of our great novelists anything at all about the writing of a great book. It is true, of course, that our great novelists have never had for the idea of literature itself that passion which has always burned in the great French ones. Their own art has never seemed to them the most important and interesting thing in life. Also it is true that they have had other occupations —fox-hunting, preaching, editing magazines, what not. Yet to them literature must, as their own main job, have had a peculiar interest and importance. No fine work can be done without concentration and self-sacrifice and toil and doubt. It is nonsense to imagine that our great novelists have just forged ahead or ambled along, reaching their goal, in the good old English fashion, by sheer divination of the way to it. A fine book, with all that goes to the making of it, is as fine a theme as a theme as a novelist can have. But it is a part of English hypocrisy that, whilst we are fluent enough in grumbling about small inconveniences, we insist on making light of any great difficulties or griefs that may beset us. And just there, I suppose, is the reason why our great novelists have shunned great books as subject-matter. It is fortunate for us (jarring though it is to our patriotic sense) that Mr. Henry James was not born an Englishman, that he was born of a race of specialists—men who are impenitent specialists in whatever they take up, be it sport, commerce, politics, anything. And it is fortunate for us that in Paris, and in the straitest literary sect there, his method began to form itself, and the art of prose fiction became to him a religion. In that art he finds as much inspiration as Swinburne found in the art of poetry. Just as Swinburne was the most learned of our poets, so is Mr. James the most learned of our—let us say "our"—prose-writers. I doubt whether the heaped total of his admirations would be found to outweigh the least one of the admirations that Swinburne had. But, though he has been a level-headed reader of the works that are good enough for him to praise, his abstract passion for the art of fiction itself has always been fierce and constant. Partly to the Parisian, partly to the American, element in him we owe the stories he, and of "our" great writers he only, has written about books and the writers of books.

Here, indeed, in these incomparable stories are imaginary great books that are as real to us as real ones are. Sometimes, as in "The Author of 'Beltraffio,'" a great book itself is the very hero of the story. (We are not told what exactly was the title of that second book which Ambient's wife so hated that she let her child die rather than that he should grow up under the influence of its author; but I have a queer conviction that it was *The Daisies*.) Usually, in these stories, it is through the medium of some ardent young disciple, writing in the first person, that we become familiar with the great writer. It is thus that we know Hugh Vereker, throughout whose twenty volumes was woven that message, or meaning, that "figure in the carpet," which eluded even the elect. It is thus that we know Neil Paraday, the MS. of whose last book was mislaid and lost so tragically, so comically. And it is also through Paraday's disciple that we make incidental acquaintance with Guy Walsingham, the young lady who wrote *Obsessions*, and with Dora Forbes, the burly man with a red moustache, who wrote *The Other*

Way Round. These two books are the only inferior books mentioned by Mr. James. But stay, I was forgetting *The Top of the Tree*, by Amy Evans; and also those nearly forty volumes by Henry St. George. For all the greatness of his success in life, Henry St. George is the saddest of the authors portrayed by Mr. James. His *Shadowmere* was splendid, and its splendor is the measure of his shame—the shame he bore so bravely—in the ruck of his "output." He is the only one of those authors who did not do his best. Of him alone it may not be said that he was "generous and delicate and pursued the prize." He is a more pathetic figure than even Dencombe, the author of *The Middle Years*. Dencombe's grievance was against fate, not against himself.

It had taken too much of his life to produce too little of his art. The art had come, but it had come after everything else. "Ah, for another go!—ah, for a better chance." . . . "A second chance—*that's* the delusion. There never was to be but one. We work in the dark—we do what we can—we give what we have. Our doubt is our passion and our passion is our task. The rest is the madness of art."

The scene of Dencombe's death is one of the most deeply-beautiful things ever done by Mr. James. It is so beautiful as to be hardly sad; it rises and glows and gladdens. It is more exquisite than anything in *The Middle Years*. No, I will not say that. Mr. James's art can always carry to us the conviction that his characters' books are as fine as his own.

I crave—it may be a foolish whim, but I do crave—ocular evidence for my belief that those books were written and were published. I want to see them all ranged along goodly shelves. A few days ago I sat in one of those libraries which seem to be doorless. Nowhere, to the eye, was broken the array of serried volumes. Each door was flush with the surrounding shelves; across each the edges of the shelves were mimicked; and in the spaces between these edges the backs of books were pasted congruously with the whole effect. Some of these backs had been taken from actual books, others had been made specially and were stamped with facetious titles that rather depressed me. "Here," thought I, "are the shelves on which Dencombe's works ought to be made manifest. And Neil Paraday's too, and Vereker's." Not Henry St. George's, of course: he would not himself have wished it, poor fellow! I would have nothing of his except *Shadowmere*. But Ray Limbert!—I would have all of his, including a first edition of *The Major Key*, "that fiery-hearted rose as to which we watched in private the formation of petal after petal, and flame after flame"; and also *The Hidden Heart*, "the shortest of his novels, but perhaps the loveliest," as Mr. James and I have always thought. . . . How my fingers would hover along these shelves, always just going to alight, but never, lest the spell were broken, alighting!

How well they would look there, those treasures of mine! And, most of them having been issued in the seemly old three-volume form, how many shelves they would fill! But I should find a place certainly for a certain small brown book adorned with a gilt griffin between wheatsheaves, *The Pilgrim's Scrip*, that delightful though anonymous work of my old friend Austin Absworthy Bearne Feverel. And I should like to find a place for *Poems*, by Aurora Leigh. Mr. Snodgrass's book of verses might grace one of the lower shelves. (What is the title of it? *Amelia's Bower*, I hazard.) *Recollections of the Late Lord Byron and Others*, by Captain Sumph, would be somewhere; for Sumph did, you will be glad to hear, take Shandon's advice and compile a volume. Bungay

published it. Indeed, of the books for which I should find room there are a good few that bear the imprimatur of Bungay. *Desperation*, or *The Fugitive Duchess*, by The Hon. Percy Popjoy, was Bungay's; and so, of course, were *Passion Flowers* and *Walter Lorraine*. Of the books issued by the rival firm of Bacon I possess but one: *Memoirs of the Poisoners*, by Dr. Slocum. Near to Popjoy's romance would be *The Lady Flabella*, of which Mrs. Wititterly said to Kate Nickleby, "So voluptuous, is it not—so soft?" *Who Put Back the Clock?* would have a place of honor (unearned, I fear, by its own merits). Among other novels that I could not spare, *The Gift of Gifts* would prominently gleam. As for *Poments*—ah, I should not be content with one copy of that. Even at the risk of crowding out a host of treasures, I vow I would have a copy of every one of the editions that *Poments* ran through.

Max Beerbohm.

The Times.

THE ASSAULT ON MARRIAGE.

The latest enthusiasm of the Cocoa Press has an importance that rarely attaches nowadays to the banalities of Bouverie Street, valuable as these are when considered as contributions to the gaiety of nations. That enthusiasm, which found almost delirious expression in the columns of the Cadbury organ recently, is for "Cheap Divorce for the Poor," and it illustrates with peculiar clearness that decay of Puritanism of which the once great Liberal organ is a living, or rather a dying, proof. "Fifty years ago," somebody once observed, "*The Daily News* was edited by Charles Dickens. Now it is edited by Chadband": a statement that, true enough once upon a time, is now perhaps a trifle unjust—to Chadband. Chadband and his kind, though objectionable persons, had yet a definite creed, repellent no doubt, but still consistent: absurd but logical. *The Daily News* has not; that is the difference. It is the victim of every stray absurdity and every wild perversity that gets blown by any "advanced" wind into its desolate office, and is liable at any moment to become obsessed by any mania that can lay claim to that magic password; never, perhaps, was its original Quaker conscience so rudely violated as by this new campaign, which it is launching against the integrity of the home and the sanctity of marriage.

Of course, if *The Daily News* were alone concerned in this latest attack upon the family—the one remaining bulwark against the servile state—it would not greatly matter. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Some of the brightest spirits of the time, some of the keenest advocates of real freedom for the poor, have become imbued with the notion that the present Divorce Laws place the workers under a serious injustice, and in their name they are demanding drastic and sweeping reforms. If we examine those reforms we shall find, so I suggest, that while they will undoubtedly meet a few cases of hardship and inconvenience, they will inflict grievous injuries upon thousands of unoffending and more or less defenceless women, and they will react most harmfully upon the whole status of motherhood, and upon the immediate future of the race.

What are the reforms in question? First, let me say from which standpoint I approach them. It is custom-

ary in this controversy over the Divorce Laws for all the advocates of change to proclaim themselves, in effect, "freethinkers," and to accuse their opponents of being blinded by religious emotion or hampered by ecclesiastical bias. I, at all events, am free from such dreadful suspicion. There is, so far as I am concerned, one consideration and one only in regard to the marriage laws—the question of expediency. So far as I am concerned, utility is the only test that I wish to employ. I am, of course, aware that even an Agnostic may be suspect of that most damaging accusation, chivalry, which is held to impair reason even more than religion, but to that also I desire most respectfully to demur. My reasons for holding that any sweeping alteration in the marriage laws is likely to prove disastrous rest solely on my own observation of human nature and my deductions therefrom.

Those reasons, fortunately, can be very simply stated. First and foremost, I am quite confident that there is no real demand for cheap divorce for the poor. So far as the workman is concerned the subject bores him—as, to be frank, it does me. There are a thousand proofs of this. In my time I have attended, I regret to say, innumerable demonstrations, "mass meetings," processions, "rallies" and parades.

What have they all been about? It is easy to tell. They have been called to demand all sorts of reforms—except this. They have insisted on the Eight Hour Day, for instance, or the Minimum Wage; or better housing or shorter hours or increased pay, and banners have danced and bands have played, and speakers have orated so that a sensual world might know that the workers were in earnest about these things. But, strange to tell, that free divorce for which the plumber pines, that easy untying of the nuptial knot, now strangling, alas, many a healthy navvy—these things were not mentioned! The only reference that I can remember on these occasions to the woman question was a general statement to the effect that those of the sex at present competing with men in the labor market would be a great deal better off if they stayed at home and looked after the children. Go to the individual workman and ask him for his views, and that, ten to one, will be the opinion you will get. Divorce—he will have none of it! The very suggestion will fill him with angry suspicion. He will tell you he has means of correcting and of asserting his authority in his household; that he has no wish to get rid of his old woman, and that on the whole you had better mind your own business. Only one type of workman will you interest by the suggestion—the type that is at once selfish and cunning.

The fact is that this passion for cheap divorce is exclusively a middle-class mania. The poor are interested in getting better wages, more decent homes. In the great majority of cases they do not wish to change their wives any more than they wish to live in a Garden City or to read Hauptman or be bored by lectures on the simple life. So far I am with the poor, and the sooner the middle-class faddists, who are running the agitation, give up the idea that the poor are pining to be released from the thraldom of matrimony, and argue their case on its merits, the better; for it is then obvious how miserably weak their case really is.

What is that case? Briefly, it is this: That at present divorce is more or less difficult, and that people who cannot afford that luxury are compelled to live together who would be happier apart, and who, with cheaper and easier facilities could secure their

freedom. That is really what it comes to. Now let us see how it would work out.

Let us suppose that it is possible for a man to divorce his wife for some cause other than infidelity (which, of course, in my view, should give him relief). Let us say he can do so by "mutual consent." The wife, let us say, is "fair, fat and forty," and the husband is of that dangerous age also. The wife has had three or four children. Perhaps her health is not of the best, nor her temper either. Her lamp of beauty is out: her charm is gone. The attractions that "mutual consent" presents to the husband may be very strong; so strong, of course, that he may set to work deliberately to secure that mutual consent by every means in his power. If he succeeds the question at once arises, what is to become of the woman, who of course will be politely shown the door? She will not sleep under her husband's roof, nor eat at his table; her place at her own hearth will be taken by another lady, and the very practical and innocent question arises, how is such a woman to live? To ask her to compete in the industrial world is sheer cruelty, and, in the majority of cases, the husband's income will prevent his making anything like ample provision for his wife's future. In a word, the middle-aged woman, who has brought up a family and given the best years of her life to the task, may find that her reward is a really pitiable fate, which she has done nothing to deserve.

Such a result is not merely unjust. It is bound to react most disastrously on the upbringing of the next generation. If an employer wants good work in his factory, he must pay his hands well, and it is equally certain that if you take away from the average work-aday wife that security of tenure, to which she is entitled, then her work, that of bringing up a family and training them in the way they should go, will, in the long run, come to be ill done and scamped and neglected. The fact that it is of paramount importance to the community will make very little difference. At present the community has sufficient sanity to give the ordinary average housewife and mother a certain status and security, which she can forfeit only by one offence. The moment that protection is removed, then, inevitably, the children of the next generation will pay the penalty and the race will suffer. That reasoning, I submit, is not due to chivalry or to religious enthusiasm, but merely to common-sense and justice.

Of course, "mutual consent" and "incompatibility of temper" are urged only by one set of divorce reformers. Others specify insanity and drunkenness as reasons why a man can get rid of his wife or *vice versa*, and on that I may observe that it is not very difficult to drive a woman—or a man either—to excessive drinking under certain circumstances, and not very difficult to get him or her certified "insane" when you have done it. Even more dangerous is the strange, the sinister proposal that marriages are to be dissolved by County Court Judges in the intervals of hearing judgment summonses brought by tallymen or bookmakers. I say it is sinister and strange for a very good reason. Accompanying it is the proposal that the "Free Press" of this country shall have no access to report divorce proceedings; that, in a word, divorces shall be granted and no one know whether for adultery or by mutual consent, or for infirmities of temper, or drunkenness, or for what reason. What does this mean? This, that the well-to-do adulterer, the seducer of his friend's wife, for instance, will get off without any trace of social odium, and that to have one's marriage annulled

will be no more unpleasant than having a County Court judgment registered against one in *Stubbs' Gazette*, and involve no more publicity.

I am not surprised under these circumstances that rich men subscribe to societies like the Divorce Law Reform Union. I am not surprised that the poor muddle-headed *Daily News* pleads for "cheap divorce." But when these things are urged in the name of the poor, then I think it time to protest. It is the poor woman and the poor mother who will suffer, and suffer cruelly, under the new dispensation—she and, through her, the race.

The well-to-do capable, "advanced" woman will, no doubt, look after herself all-right. Not so her poorer sister. For her "cheap divorce" means the cheapening of motherhood by the loss of all its safeguards, and the relegation of herself to a fate too cruel to bear contemplation.

C. Sheridan Jones.

The New Witness.

THE PLAGUE OF PICTURES.

Our conventional moral censors are led hopelessly astray by that queer British sex-obsession which causes them to be eternally scenting degeneracy in the latest vagaries of the fashion-plate, the ballroom, and the variety theatre. As a matter of fact, the dominant vice of the present generation of English people has nothing whatever to do with the Seventh Commandment or the special affairs of Mrs. Grundy. It is, in plain words, the vice of intense and incorrigible mental laziness. Their demand is for freedom from intellectual exertion at all costs, and to induce them to take a sustained interest in anything that really matters becomes more and more difficult. Politicians bewail the public apathy in relation to questions of the gravest national and imperial moment; theologians are baffled by the sheer inertia which evades the trouble of accepting or rejecting a creed with the vague postulate that one form of faith is probably, on the whole, as good as another; leaders of movements, and pioneers of new departures in art, in literature, and in the theatre, find only a select few with sufficient energy of mind either to support or controvert their views. To form definite opinions on any subject under the sun involves the exercise of thought; and to be spared the trouble of thinking has apparently become the supreme desire of the average twentieth century Briton.

Nothing, not even the breathless rush of modern life, can have done much more to encourage this mental atrophy than the rise and progress of the popular illustrated newspaper; not the paper that merely includes illustrations among its contents—they all do that nowadays—but the daily journal, professedly of current news, which is before all things a picture-paper. A few years ago, such a thing was unknown; to-day, papers of this kind circulate by hundreds of thousands, and by a vast number of readers are regarded not as adjuncts to, but as welcome substitutes for, the ordinary newspaper—which means that they have become, for very many people, the sole channels of daily information about public affairs and current events. To look at the pictures seems to involve almost as much mental effort as their patrons are willing to expend in gathering the news of the day; so the pictures are all-pervading, and the letterpress is reduced to a minimum. But even that is not the worst; for it invariably happens that, in the presentation of this illustrated news, the de-

gree of prominence is regulated by the pictorial value or sensational effectiveness of its several items, rather than by their intrinsic importance. Thus, a bazaar or a boxing-match, the latest jewel robbery, or the last new thing in negroid dance-measures, is likely to receive far more attention than many an event affecting the welfare of an empire or the peace of a continent. Small wonder that those who depend entirely upon the picture-paper for their intelligence—in either meaning of the word—are apt to lose their sense of proportion, and with it the faculty of interesting themselves duly in the things that matter.

This prevailing laziness of mind, of which the latter-day craze for perpetually looking on at other people's games and sports is another of many symptoms, has also, no doubt, been pandered to by the snippety journals of "bits" and "cuts," so profusely provided for the modern multitude. But it has gained its crowning satisfaction in the now ubiquitous picture-palaces in which those who crave entertainment wholly divorced from mental effort find their earthly paradise. Even the crudest type of popular fiction demands from its readers a certain measure of concentration; the spectators of "the pictures," assisted by the terse running commentaries flashed at intervals upon the screen, are absolved from the trouble of exercising their minds at all. And so it comes about that these places are little gold-mines, and that they continue to multiply at an amazing rate in every city and town in the kingdom.

A great deal of cant has been talked, in this connection, about the value of the cinematograph as an educational instrument. No one would be so stupid as to deny that its possibilities as a popular educator are, in theory, very considerable. But the most casual study of the programme of the average picture-theatre—apart from a few ambitious West End houses which draw their patronage from a more select and cultivated class—will suffice to show to what extent the appeal to intelligence enters into the scheme of those who exploit the film as a vehicle of public amusement. There may be an occasional pictorial version of some famous novel, or even—to the undisguised boredom of the majority of spectators—an attempt to illustrate some story from the ancient classics, by way of giving an air of comprehensiveness and a suggestion of "tone" to the programme. But the items which provide the bulk of the entertainment, and upon which its unlimited powers of attraction depend, are furnished in fairly equal proportions by sensational stories of crime, mawkishly sentimental domestic drama, Far Western "cowboy" romance, with revolver practice *ad libitum*, rough-and-tumble buffoonery, and illustrations of topical events—these last being, to all intents and purposes, the "picture-paper" over again in an animated and consequently far more seductive form. It would, of course, be absurd to find fault with the people who run these places on the score of the class of entertainment that they provide. As commercial dealers in amusement, it is their business to discover what their customers want and to supply it. But that the majority of their "shows" give much suggestion of their value as an educational medium, it would need a rare degree of moral hardihood to pretend.

There is no need to over-emphasize what has been said of late about the influence upon young and impressionable minds of the criminal and sensational stories which these picture-theatres illustrate so freely, though the possibilities of harm from this source cannot wholly be ignored. But it is far from reassuring to learn that not only the

public libraries but even the technical evening schools are being adversely affected, as regards attendance, by the lure of "the pictures." If the disastrous inertness of mind that is betrayed by this readiness to grasp shadows and lose the substance is not checked in time, the present picture-epidemic may prove, in the long run, a deadlier scourge to its victims than any of the plagues of ancient Egypt.

Alfred Berlyn.

The Academy.

"DASH."

"There's no book like it," said A. "Get it at once."

"You must read *Dash*," said B.

"If you take my advice," said C., "and you know I'm not easily pleased by modern fiction, you'll get *Dash* and simply peg away till you've finished it. It's marvellous."

"I suppose you've read Darnock's *Dash*?" said D. "It's by far his best thing."

At dinner my partner on each side gurglingly wished to know how I liked *Dash*, taking it for granted that I knew it more or less by heart.

So having read some of Darnock's earlier work and thought it good, I acquired a copy of *Dash* and settled down to it.

I had not read more than two pages when it occurred to me that I ought to know what the other books in the library parcel were; so I went to look at them. One was a series of episodes in the career of a wonderful blind policeman who, in spite of his infirmity, performed prodigies of tact on point duty, and by the time I had finished glancing through this it was bed-time. I put *Dash* under my arm, for I always read for half-an-hour or so in bed. How it happened I cannot imagine, but when I picked up the book and began to read I found, much to my surprise, that it was the other library novel.

"Have you begun *Dash* yet?" B. asked me at lunch.

"Oh, yes, rather," I said.

"I envy you," he replied. "How far have you got?"

"Not very far yet," I said.

"It's fine, isn't it?" he remarked.

"Fine."

The next evening I had just taken up *Dash* again when I remembered that that other novel must be finished if it was to be changed on the morrow, so I turned dutifully to that instead. It was a capital story about a criminal who murdered people in an absolutely undetectable way by lending them a poisoned pencil which would not mark until the point was moistened. I enjoyed it thoroughly.

The next evening I was getting on famously with the fifth page of *Dash* when the library parcel again arrived, containing two new books for those I had returned in the morning.

Meeting C. the next day he asked me if I did not think *Dash* the finest thing I had ever read.

I said yes, but asked him if he had not found it a little difficult to get into.

"Possibly," he said, "possibly. But what a reward!"

"You like books all in long conversations?" I asked.

"I love *Dash*," he said, "anyway."

"Did you read every word?" I asked.

"Well, not perhaps every word," he replied, "but I got the sense of every page. I read like that, you know—synthetically."

"Yes, of course," I said.

The next day I changed the two library books that were finished for two more, but it was *Dash* which I took up first. There is no doubt about its being a very remarkable book, but I had had a rather heavy day and my brain was not at its best. What extraordinary novels people do write nowadays! Fancy making a whole book, as the author of *Hot Maraschino* has done, out of the Elberfeldt talking horses! In this book, which has an excellent murder in a stable in it, the criminal is given away by a horse who tells her master (it is a mare) what she saw. I couldn't lay the story down.

That night I dined out and heard more about *Dash*. In fact, I myself started one long conversation on that topic with an idle lady who really had read every word. I went on to recommend it right and left. "You must read *Dash*," I said at intervals; "it's extraordinarily good."

"Some one was telling me he couldn't get on with it at all," said one of my partners.

"Not really?" I said, and clicked my tongue reproachfully.

"Yes, he says it's so involved and rambling."

"Ah, well," I said, "one must persevere. Books mustn't be too easy. For my part—— Yes, champagne, please."

"I'll get it, anyway," she said. "I feel sure your judgment is sound."

Looking in at the club later I found D. playing snooker. After missing an easy shot he turned the talk to *Dash*.

"Tip-top, isn't it?" he said.

"Which is your favorite chapter?" I asked.

His face told me I had him.

"Oh, well, that's difficult to say," he replied.

"Surely you think that one about the stevedore's spaniel, towards the end, is terrific?" I said.

"Of course that's fine," he replied, "but I was just wondering whether——"

But I didn't stop to listen. There is no stevedore and no spaniel in the whole book, as I had carefully ascertained.

The next day I had A., B. and C. with the same device.

Meanwhile I am plodding away with *Dash*. I have now reached page 27. A great book, as all agree. But the books that I shall read while I am reading it will make a most interesting list.

Punch.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

There is something that piques the curiosity in the very name of "The Unpopular Review" (Henry Holt & Co.). So frank an avowal of an intention to run counter to prevailing fads and fancies,—political, social and other—tends to awaken interest and disarm criticism. The April-June number of the Review is the second, and well sustains the reputation made by the first for clearness and cogency and humor. Among the subjects discussed are The Soul of Capitalism, A Sociological Nightmare, Social Untruth and the Social Unrest, Natural Aristocracy, The Right to be Amused, How Woman Suffrage has Worked, The Case for Pigeon-Holes, Our Sublime Faith in Schooling, The Barbarian Invasion, Trust-Busting as a National Pastime, and Our Government Subvention to Literature. If the Review keeps up to the high level of these two numbers, there may be occasion to re-christen

it, for such bright and keen criticism of contemporary movements cannot be wholly unpopular. The Editor makes a slight concession to his readers by giving, in the advertising pages of this number, the names of the writers of the articles in the first number,—a practice which will be continued.

Alfred Bishop Mason's "A Primer of Political Economy" (A. C. McClurg & Co., publishers) is a compact and pungent little volume which aims to set forth, in definitions and propositions, some of the essential facts and principles relating to the production and distribution of wealth. The author hopes that the book may find a place as a text-book in the schools, besides enlightening the general reader. Its usefulness in both particulars is limited by the fact that the author does not confine himself to established principles, but makes the book a vehicle for the dogmatic statement of his own views, in particular that "the best tax is the single tax," which is the conclusion to which he leads.

Long familiarity with stage tradition, and an established habit of studying the logic of events, and never forgetting the merciless audience conscious of every movement of every creature on the other side of the footlights have given Mrs. Ruth Holt Boucicault capacity to write a story that seems to pass before one's eyes as one reads her vivid pages. The scenes in "The Substance of His House" succeed one another easily and naturally, each one amusing, but none seeming to lead anywhere in particular, until there comes a frost, a killing frost that nips the root of all happiness. Last comes the opportunity of redemption, most gladly accepted. The noble self-sacrifice of the heroine is finely conceived, and if it be something too grand to be instantly accepted as true, it is none the less beautiful. The melodrama of the tale occupies but a brief space. The sin which will seem no sin to many readers begins in one word and culminates in twenty, and for all of them the sinner's conscience is justified. The end surprises, but is extremely well managed. Mrs. Boucicault has a very good style although she is now and then guilty of a mixed metaphor. The story is one of the best of those brought by a season which has produced an almost unprecedented number of novels concerned in the never ending drama of "He, She, and Another." Little, Brown & Co.

It is rare that the personal and historic elements blend so intimately in a career but lately closed as in the life of Thomas Wentworth Higginson, as told by his wife, Mary Thacher Higginson (Houghton Mifflin Co.). It seems but a few months,—it is, in fact, less than three years—since the tranquil end came to this brilliant and varied career, but it was a long life of nearly eighty-eight years, the story of which is told in these pages, and a life of great activity through nearly all that period. As teacher and preacher; as writer and lecturer; as a fearless leader in great reforms; as one of the most prominent participants in such anti-slavery crises as the attempted rescue of Anthony Burns, the struggle for a free Kansas and the John Brown raid; as Colonel of the first black regiment in the civil war; and later, through long and peaceful years, as essayist, poet and historian, maker of books and master of the most limpid and forceful English, Colonel Higginson,—for his military title continued the most familiar to the end—was one of the most widely-known and best-beloved Americans of his time. It would be impossible that such a career as his should fail to furnish material

for an engaging and deeply interesting biography, especially from the pen of a writer who had shared some of the most fruitful years of his life, and had access to his notes, diaries and letters. This memoir is all that might have been hoped for under such conditions,—intimate, but not exaggerated, and presenting sympathetic views not only of the subject himself, but of men of letters and men of affairs who were among his close friends. The portrait which forms the frontispiece presents Colonel Higginson as many of those who read this biography will best remember him,—at the age of eighty, but looking hardly more than sixty,—a face strong, open, serene and kindly. There are other portraits,—one of the most charming showing him and his little daughter Margaret riding on a tricycle, a familiar spectacle twenty-five or thirty years ago in Cambridge.

Carroll Storrs Alden, of the United States Naval Academy, is the author of a biography of Commodore George Hamilton Perkins (Houghton Mifflin Co.) which has more than a personal interest, since Commodore Perkins,—then lieutenant or commander—had a share in some of the most important naval engagements of the Civil War. He was one of the two naval officers who went ashore from Farragut's fleet at New Orleans and made their way tranquilly through a howling mob to demand the surrender of the city; and he commanded the *Chickasaw* in the battle of Mobile Bay. It may be a consolation to some struggling youth that even so brilliant a career as this did not begin auspiciously, for Perkins' course at the Naval Academy was marred by pranks and inattention which very nearly sent him back to his friends, and did cause him to be dropped to a lower class. But the discipline of life at sea during the years between his graduation and the outbreak of the Civil War fitted him for the part which he was to play in that crisis, and for his later service until his retirement in 1891. Some of the most intimate glimpses of his character and some of the most diverting records of his experiences, during the war, and upon foreign cruises are obtained from his letters, which his biographer quotes freely. There are nine illustrations, most of them portraits.

A graphic portrayal of the horrors of war, even in spirited and at times musical verse, does not make the pleasantest reading, but it is wholesome and necessary for those who are inclined to minimize the horrors and exalt the glory of the battlefield. In writing "The Wine-Press" (Frederick A. Stokes Co.) Alfred Noyes has used his rare gifts in telling a vivid and thrilling tale of the recent savage fighting in the Balkans, taking as his central figure a peasant who left his wife and child to join in the war against the Turk, was severely wounded, regained his strength just as the new war began between Greece and the Balkan allies, and reached home at last only to find his wife and child shamefully murdered. It is a tragic tale, even as retold in a few lines of prose, but it is full of passion and horror as Alfred Noyes tells it in vehement verse. But it closes on a note of hope:

"It is the Dawn! The Dawn! The nations
From East to West have heard a cry,—
Though all earth's blood-red generations
By hate and slaughter climbed thus high,
Here—on this height—still to aspire,
One only path remains untrod,
One path of love and peace climbs higher,
Make straight the highway for our God.